# PAUL PERIWINKLE:

OR,

# The Pressgang.

IN THREE BOOKS.

W J Meade

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "CAVENDISH,"

"THE FLYING DUTCHMAN," "NAVAL SURGEON," ETC.

"I learnt it from a book certainly of no austere character;—but, gentlemen, even from the least pretending volume much useful information may be gained."—*Mr. Baron Alderson's Address to the Jury, Oxford Assizes*, 1839.

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# DEDICATION.

TO

## ROBERT ALLEN, ESQ. M.A. F.S.A.

BARRISTER AT LAW.

DEAR ALLEN,

As a very inadequate tribute of a most warm regard, do me the favour to accept these pages. Many of them were written in the enjoyment of your society, and containing as they do sketches of characters we both esteem, may thus acquire in your eyes an interest not otherwise to be discovered in their discursive story.

Time out of mind it has been the privilege of the dedicator to say something handsome of the dedicatee. But though neither of us has been particularly accused of taciturnity, I confess in this case, though I exhausted my vocabulary, it would still leave untold the brightest part of that manly and accomplished excellence to which these lines shall be sacred.

Wishing you in Oriental fashion, therefore, to take a year in the reading of each leaf, and yet to get safely to the end of my story,

Believe me ever to remain,

DEAR ALLEN,

Your faithful friend,

W. JOHNSON NEALE.

*Middle Temple, Jan.* 1841.

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# ADVERTISEMENT.

In offering to the Public the following Tale, the most distinct disclaimer is entered of the least intention to trespass on the domain of Mr. Dickens, the originator of this species of publication. In style, plot, and story, the greatest dissimilarity will be found. But while the thirsty world of readers, are famished during the long intervals of the "greater rain" from month to month, it is conceived that the humble "water-course" of "The Pressgang," springing up betwixt and between, may serve to moisten the parched lips of a few of those literary imbibers, who, like the writer, delight in renewing a periodical acquaintance with the amiable and inimitable "Boz."

# PAUL PERIWINKLE;

OR,

# THE PRESSGANG.

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## CHAPTER THE FIRST,

### WHICH PLUNGES INTO THE MIDDLE OF OUR TALE.

"SIR JOB!—Sir Job Periwinkle!—For heaven's sake get up, Sir Job! Here's murder in the house!" vehemently exclaimed the old butler, knocking long and loudly at his master's door. The grey twilight of a December's day was just breaking, as the old domestic, half dressed and wholly frightened, stood shivering in the long oaken gallery, endeavouring to make his voice penetrate through the double door of Sir Job's chamber.

It was in truth no easy matter. Fashioned in the same substantial manner as the rest of the old Grange, which had been built by a loyal officer of Elizabeth's court, the thin voice of the caller appeared unable to arouse the sleeper within, whose slumbers were at no time of the lightest. In addition to this difficulty, the old man seemed to labour under some apprehension of disturbing others for whom his summons was not intended; still, as he repeated it, his eyes glanced fearfully round the grim-looking corridor, and his head was stretched out in that peculiar attitude which marks the act of listening.

Nothing, however, appeared to move in sight, unless it was the fitful lifting of some of the old pictures, which, covered with the smoke and dirt of a century and a half, looked like the portraits of the doomed, as they borrowed a degree of life from the sudden gusts of the north-east wind that shook the walls on which they hung, and howled round the many angles of the house outside. When the butler found that his efforts were ineffectual to gain attention, he took a few steps to and fro before the closed door, wringing his hands, as if uncertain what to do, he then repeated the summons once again, and finding it unanswered, glided noiselessly to a recess where one of the old fashioned windows projected, in the middle of the building. Opening the lattice, he

looked out upon the view in front. The snow had been falling thickly in the early part of the night, and was still lying deep upon the ground, while the sky wore that dull heavy appearance which bespoke it charged with much more. In the east, the light began to clear away the thick leaden clouds, and the wind poured down fiercely upon the vast expanse of ocean, where line upon line of dazzling foam, marked out the long seas rolling in towards the land, and spoke of the quarter from whence the wind blew, as intelligibly as the compass itself could have done.

On the right, a huge headland reared its abrupt height, and the waves broke thundering at its base, filling the ear with the perpetual but not unpleasing murmur of their roar. Placed, as the Grange was, on an eminence that commanded an extensive view around, the beach itself was nevertheless hidden from the windows, by the gigantic trees of a winding avenue of oak and elm that led down almost to the sands, and was the nearest communication with the little fishing village to the left. From the branches of this avenue, innumerable rooks were rising, circling in the air, already on the look-out for prey, and making with their melancholy cries the only sound of life.

But the attention of the butler was rivetted on a sight more intensely absorbing than any of the objects we have mentioned. Along the dazzlingly pure surface of the snow was seen a tract of footsteps, intermingled with which, at every step, was a closely dotted line of blood, which wound their way together down the avenue, and with a slight deviation to the left, as if to avoid the lodge gates, crossed through a gap in the surrounding hedge, and made towards the sea.

Still nearer, however, to the house, and almost immediately under its windows, a far larger stain seemed to have been caused by the same sanguinary fluid, though of a much paler tint, and when the old man's eyes rested on these deadly tokens, his agony seemed to increase tenfold. Hastily closing the lattice, he hurried back to Sir Job Periwinkle's door, and recommenced his attempts to awake the knight.

At last a fall was heard within, that might have answered for the overthrow of the Farnesian Hercules; three or four heavy footsteps followed, a night bolt was drawn up from the inner door, which at the same time unfastened the outer, and Sir Job Periwinkle, in his dressing-gown, stepped into the gallery.

He was a tall commanding personage, in figure being something over six feet two inches high, and bulky in proportion; the hair was fast retreating from his forehead, which was bold and open, but on the crown of the head, and round the temples, it still curled freely, though speaking plainly of the sixty years which had passed over it.

"Oh, Sir Job!" exclaimed the butler, as he appeared, "I am so glad I've made you hear at last."

The frown that had gathered on the knight's brow relaxed, as he looked on the pale and terrified countenance of his servant. "What's the matter, Corkindale?"

"God only knows the whole of it, sir; but I fear something very terrible!"

"What is it? what is it?" repeated Sir Job, passing his hand once

or twice before his eyes, as if rightly to comprehend what was the matter. "One would think the French had begun the war with an invasion. Have they landed, or what?"

"Oh no, sir; something much worse than that, I fear."

"Worse than that, you scoundrel; what d'ye mean? what can happen worse than that?"

"Oh, sir, it's nothing to do with the French; 'tis some terrible calamity in our own family. I got up this morning, sir, just before daybreak, as I usually do, and went to open the window and look out, for I thought I'd heard some curious noises during the night. Well, sir, I could not see anything just then; it was too dark; so I went away and dressed, and presently, when I came to look, there I saw footsteps right from the front door, with drops of blood, going all the way down the avenue, while directly a'most under my window was a large splash, as if some bloody water had been thrown out of the house; well, directly I saw this, sir, I took the light I had been dressing with, and went down stairs, and on this floor, sir," here the butler lowered his voice and looked fearfully round, "I found the drops of blood leading directly out of Mr. Paul's room, all the way down the great staircase, to the very door; well, sir, I thought some accident might have happened, so I crept back, and opening the door as softly as I could, I looked in, and there was Master Paul lying in bed covered with blood, the bedclothes blood all over, and the floor too; while Mr. Jack, you know, sir, who took half his bed last night to make room for Counsellor Doubtful, who came so late—"

"Yes, yes, I remember."

"Well, sir, Mr. Jack was not in the room. Do come and see, sir, what's happened, for we've all of us suspected, that is, the servant's of the house, sir, that there would be some terrible quarrel between the two young gentlemen."

"Quarrel, Corkindale! How---why---on what account?"

"Miss Nora, sir. They've been heard at high words several times lately, sir, and the young lady's name was mentioned several times between them, and no one can have helped seeing that neither of 'em are ever out of her company, sir, if they can help it. Two or three times I have been a'going to mention it to you, sir, but I was afraid of doing wrong. I only wish I had, for now I fear worse has come of it."

"Of course, you old fool! of course; anything of importance you must put off till it's too late to be useful. If it had been some cursed rubbish, as a barrel of ale running out a week too soon, I should have been sure to hear of it; however, come away and let me see what the truth is;" and Sir Job, who had gone into his dressing-room for some further clothing, now walked quickly, but quietly, towards his son's door.

By this time the degree of light that streamed through the narrow, but numerous windows of Berrylea, the name of the Grange, was quite sufficient to distinguish every object. The first point to which the father directed his attention, was the blood upon the floor, which, as Corkindale had said, went down the chief staircase to the front door.

Having opened the latter, and looked out at the continuance of the fatal line through the snow, he then returned, gently opened his son's door, and looked within.

Sir Job Periwinkle was one of those to whom nature had given an iron constitution, both of frame and mind; neither the one nor the other was easily disturbed from its usual course. Forced to fight his way through the world single-handed, without the aid of money or friends, he had risen from the lowest ranks of commercial life to its highest point: from earning a scanty livelihood as a clerk at twenty-three shillings a week, to occupying the chair of London's first magistrate, to which dignity he had a few weeks since been elected.

But, however accustomed to bear the buffets of the world, everything in his family had hitherto gone well with him; when he beheld, therefore, his son's bedroom dabbled over with bloody footsteps, the pillow, the counterpane, the clothes on which the young man lay, all covered with the same revolting marks, the colour forsook his ruddy cheek with instantaneous rapidity, and compressing his lips together, he stood for a moment as if utterly at a loss how to act.

During this saddening pause, time was afforded him for more narrow observation of everything around. Inside the bed, some one, whom, from the dark colour of his hair, he took to be his son, Paul Periwinkle, was lying with his face buried in his hands, and looking more like one who had been weeping violently, than sleeping peacefully in his own chamber. His appearance at once tending to confirm the fears that had already been raised in Sir Job's mind, he waited for a few seconds to see if his son spoke. The heaving of the body, as the breath was drawn, was visible, and a low moaning sound every now and then broke forth, but no attempt was made to discover who were the intruders on his repose, nor any sign given that their presence was perceived.

With suspicions still more strongly excited at every moment, Sir Job stepped into the centre of the room, and there beheld, in the wash-hand basin, the remains of some bloody water, as if some one, with hands incarnadine, had been attempting to wash out the stains, thrown away the impure water, and yet left enough behind to tell the fatal tale. With a motion of the head, that plainly told how this appearance had been translated, Sir Job strode towards the window, and throwing it open, perceived the bright yellow surface of the house outside bearing too evident traces of just such a stream having been sprinkled down it in the passage of the water to the ground. Scarcely daring to hope that all these odious appearances could be satisfactorily explained away, he returned to the bedside. Still the son neither attempted to move nor speak. Unable any longer to bear the suspense, Sir Job laid his hand somewhat roughly, as well as powerfully, on the young man's shoulder, and turning him over on his back, it was evident, as had been expected, that he had been weeping violently—his eyes and eyelids being much inflamed, and the traces of tears still visible on his cheeks.

"What's the matter, sir," demanded his father.

"Nothing, my lord, nothing; only let me sleep," was the reply, as Paul, quickly facing round to the wall, pretended to be yet half slumbering.

"Come, come, sir, this won't do," resumed the other; "I insist on knowing what has happened—where is your cousin Jack?"

The very mention of the last named seemed to affect the son with some strange emotion, and after gasping forth some inarticulate sounds between a sob and a groan, he dashed his hand violently on the clothes beside him, exclaiming, "I may never see his face again!"

"Come, sir," and the stern tones of Sir Job's voice bespoke how much he was alarmed, "sit up this instant, and tell me what you have done with your cousin?—where is he?---what has happened between you?---what is the meaning of all this blood about your room and clothes?"

"Blood!" repeated Paul, now for the first time awakening, or seeming to awaken, to the consciousness of what was going on around him. "Where is there blood?---What?" and again he passed his hands over his eyes. "Am I awake, or am I still dreaming? What is the meaning of all this? Who has made the room in this disgusting state?"

"Look at yourself, sir," said Sir Job, "before you feign so much astonishment! Your room might have been covered with bloody footmarks without your knowing it, though that would not have been easy; nor do I see who could have equally daubed your bedclothes without your knowledge, or, still more, what purpose it could have answered; yet these acts *might be* within the bounds of *possibility*. But all the acting in the world won't suffice to prove you ignorant of some person having tried to wash the blood off your face and hands, and only left the traces of it more undeniable. I suppose you know nothing of him either."

As Sir Job Periwinkle said these words, he handed to his son, with a degree of abhorrence and disgust he could not control, the looking-glass. Snatching it eagerly from his father's hands, Paul gave but one glance. Too truly did it reflect the terrible condition of his person, since all round his face and ears, as Sir Job had said, was smeared a blurred red tint, deeper in some places than others, and evidently arising from the cause attributed.

On his hands, these damning proofs were still more strongly attested. Letting fall the glass before him, the wretched young man looked first at the right hand, slowly scrutinizing now the inside and now the out, and then at the left; then, looking up in his father's face, while the most ghastly pallor overspread his own, replied—

"I know no more of this than I do of the rest!"

"Answer me this one question, sir!" continued the knight, his scorn and rage rising at every denial of facts so self-evident. "Did you wash your hands in that basin, and throw the water out of window?"

"Not I! I don't remember any thing about the basin. Yet stay," ---for a minute he hesitated, then jumped out of bed, looked at the basin in question, then out of the open window. When he returned from his inspection, he was seen passionately to clasp first one hand

and then the other, raise them to his face, and burst into a flood of tears.

The poor father was scarcely less affected. No convulsive twitching appeared in his limbs, as in that of his son. Paralyzed by the intense force with which the brows were knit together and the lips compressed, contracting every few seconds like the writhing of the whip-cord under some very heavy power; these symptoms showed, as he paced up and down the room, with his hands folded behind him, that his agony was not less than that of the accused. Still he uttered no reproach, expressed no word that might be construed into intimidation, unless the few syllables, "So unlike a Briton!" which he seemed unable to refrain from half growling to himself, at every few minute's interval.

As for the butler, true old Corkindale, he stood just outside the door, now throwing himself into one attitude, now into another, and making a thousand expressions to the idle sounds, and muttering whole sentences, which none could hear, for his master had peremptorily cautioned him to say or do nothing till he came out of the room.

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## NEW CHAPTER,

### IN WHICH FRESH EVENTS DEVELOPE THEMSELVES, AND NEW CHARACTERS ARE INTRODUCED.

While Sir Job's son stood near the window, to all appearance utterly unable to suppress the deep grief that moved him, Sir Job himself continued his slow pace, to and fro, across the room, trying if, in the dismal mist before him, hope could discern any land of comfort, however distant, or experience suggest to him what course would be the most proper to pursue. He now also began to remember, that surprise had, for an instant, banished the necessity of making instant and unceasing search for his nephew. Turning round to Paul once more, he said, "Now, sir, have you determined yet what answer you think most desirable to my question—whether you used that basin, and then threw its contents out of window? First you denied it; then it seemed to me you were about to acknowledge it. Pray which do you think the best line of the two?"

"I do not deserve this at your hands, Sir Job. I remember how I did use it; but how the water came to be tinged with blood, I know no more than you do."

"Do you know, then, sir, how you became so anxious to throw it away, out of a front window?"

"Yes; I thought I heard my cousin's dog howling just below, and I wanted to get to sleep."

"Sir, I sleep one story nearer to the ground than you do, but I heard no dog; and pray, sir, do you generally get up in the dark, at night, to wash your face and hands?"

"No."

"Then what led to this exception?"

"I was feverish and uneasy."

"What made you feverish and uneasy, sir, *last night* particularly, after a hard day's shooting?"

In reply to this query, Paul was silent; and as Sir Job fixed his bright glance upon the young man's countenance, it gradually deepened into a hue that entirely shamed and hid the washy tint before evident upon it, and while his head as slowly sank upon his bosom, the latter responded to the shocks of the heart, with a vehemence that denoted the intense excitement under which he laboured.

For several seconds the old man also stood silent, hoping that the suspicions his son was now every moment rendering darker, might yet be dispelled by some sort of explanation, however lame or impartial. But when Sir Job perceived that not even an attempt was made at this, he turned away, exclaiming, as he lifted up his hands—

"Oh, Paul Periwinkle! you have this night disgraced a British family. Storm after storm have we braved, and every sea has left us —like the little shell from which we are named—more firmly rooted to the land where we were born. But a stream like this," pointing to the clothes of Paul, and the bed from which he had risen, "undefended, unexplained—who can stand before it? If you wish to do a favour to a father you've done your best to ruin, answer me this: Have you had any quarrel with your cousin Jack?"

"Yes, sir, I confess I have."

"Did it relate to my niece, Nora?"

At the mention of that name, all Paul's agitation seemed to return. His blanched cheek was again crimsoned, his bosom once more laboured—"Suspect me, wrong me, torture me if you will; but do not attempt to drag from me any answer to such a question. Oh, that I had never seen her fatal beauty!"

And flinging himself down on the spot from which he had risen, he gave way to the intolerable anguish that seemed weighing on his mind.

Finding that it was utterly hopeless to expect from this quarter any clue by which to arrive at a solution of the tragic mystery which the past night had produced, Sir Job left his son's room, scarcely less mournful, though more composed.

"Corkindale!" addressing the butler, who was still waiting at the door, "remain in Mr. Paul's chamber till my return; see that he does himself no harm. Above all, do not let the knowledge of what has happened transpire to a single being more than you can help—especially the ladies of the family, Miss Nora and Lady Periwinkle in particular; and try if you can send up some story by and by to keep the chattering maid-servants in bed an hour later to day than usual. I am going to call Mr. Charles, and see if my nephew can by any happy chance be found to explain these appearances."

"Very well, my lord," replied the old man, whose scattered senses had not before allowed him to bear in mind the fact of his master's

newly-acquired dignities as chief citizen, an honour which, in truth, that master was already beginning to discover, gave additional point to every sting in life, as well as additional pleasure to it.

As the old man watched the knight depart, he shook his head sorrowfully, muttering, "Ye may search long enough before these old eyes see Mr. John in life or health again, I fear."

From the room of sorrow, and agony, and shame, in which we have just left Paul Periwinkle, let us now accompany the father to that of his eldest surviving son, Charles; or, as he was affectionately called by his family, from his profession, Counsellor Charley. It was a good old fashion of a good old time, when men were designated after their various callings. The ancient and legitimate name and style of parson, in the church, and its aforesaid corollary in law, seem to have been somewhat unwisely allowed by the two professions to vanish from among us, leaving the doctors and professors only in the field; yet who can recal the clerical designation without a thought of Fielding, and the whole file of connected worthies? or hear the legal cognomen given in the provinces, and not linger for a moment on the memory of Silvertongue and Balthasar in the Merchant of Venice? It lessened, moreover, the chances of awkward positions. Now, a man is as likely to venture on some sly touch at church-rates or tithes to a reverend vicar, or growl out the reminiscences of some unhappy suit to one of the long robe, as utter them safely and softly to good Mr. Thomson, who deals wholesale in cheeses or cotton-twist, just as the case may be. You may tell a naval man by the cut of his jib; a military hero by his having his head up and his coat buttoned; but when art has refined the rest of the world to the high pitch of wearing black and saying nothing, it has become somewhat difficult to respect your neighbour's avocations.

"Charles, my boy!" said the father, entering the room of his son, who like himself was a heavy sleeper; a partial snore, and a turn round on the other side, as if to get out of the way, formed the only reply.

"Charles, Charles!" repeated the knight, bestowing his heavy fist most freely on his heir's shoulder. In an instant the barrister was sitting up, rubbing his eyes, and groaning most dreadfully.

"I say, Mr. My Lord Mayor, this won't do, you know, this won't do. I object, my lord—I object most decidedly to this line of proceeding. You don't call this, I hope, *leniter manus imposuit*; according to the pleadings. I'm sure such a slap as that was not laying your 'hand gently on him as you lawfully might' No, my lord, I say it was a dead case of assault; one that calls for heavy damages: and I shall get them, too, from a person in your station: and it's no use your saying anything in defence, for I won't be interrupted, my lord. It isn't because a man's made Lord Mayor, you know, that he's to knock about every poor devil in his house at six o'clock in a winter's morning, when there isn't light enough to see even whether his bruises are black or blue. I shall state the case at length to the jury, you may depend upon it, my

lord. You think, I suppose, because there are no witnesses, you may come here and whack me as much as you please: I know, since you've got on the Mansion-house bench, and that sort of thing, you imagine you're a lawyer made all at once; but that intuitive law won't do, it won't hold water. Be pleased to remember an indictment will lie for the breach of the peace, at any rate; and I'm not sure I couldn't make it out a burglary, at a pinch. You've no business, you know, to break and enter my room; and that you've come with a felonious intent I see in your eye. You've heard, I suppose, of my picking up a fee or two last sessions; but you're too late, old boy, they're all spent.—Won't do—won't do; though it's equally bad of you to come and try to bone 'em. First break my neck, and then bone my fees! Too bad; too bad."

"Charles, my poor boy!" said Sir Job, seating himself on the couch, and taking his son's hand, with a melancholy smile, "I cannot laugh to-day, not even with you; something has happened in our family—"

The old man could go no farther. As the vivid contrast came before him—the exuberant gaiety of one son, and the deadly anguish of the other, a large tear gathered on his eyelid and rolled slowly down his cheek. It was but the weakness of the moment. Dashing it instantly aside, he resumed, in his usually collected voice, "Something, I fear, has happened in our family, which may banish laughter from this old house for the rest of our lives. John and Paul have, I fear, had some dreadful quarrel, as far as I can learn, about poor little Nora; John is missing, and Paul's bed-clothes and room are covered with blood: for John, you know, took part of Paul's bed, last night, to make room for your friend, Mr. Doubtful, who came after the servants had all retired. I have been endeavouring to get from Paul some account or explanation of the affair, and the many appearances that make so much against him, but he will give nothing of the sort."

"Well, this is a nice tale for a December morning, certainly. But don't be alarmed; I dare say it may turn up all right. Cousins and brothers always fight, but rarely do one another much damage; and when such a pretty face as Nora's is in the case, we must make extra allowance; besides, Jack and Paul are both good-natured fellows enough. Have you had any search made for the body?"

"No; I've only just been called up myself."

"Oh, then, I'll tell you all about it.—Paul and Jack each began to sing out little Nora's name in their sleep. One wakes the other, and the other wakes the one; both claim exclusive right to the personal property; and neither has a right to mention it, without the other's consent. First, they have some words; then an altercation; then, as the night is cold, two or three amicable rounds in bed, just to keep them warm; Paul, who's much the better boxer of the two, gives Jack, you see, a bloody nose, and then they think they've fought enough; but, as the bleeding won't stop, Jack goes quietly off to take a dip in the sea, sees a light in the village public-house, goes in, insists on a bottle of grog, and, what's more, won't start till it's

finished; and now, as I'm dressed, you and I will go quietly down there, and find him over his last glass, with nothing on but his trowsers and shirt, a cigar in his mouth, and the landlady's daughter on his knee; and that little fool, Nora, all the while is fast asleep, slighting poor Paul, and dreaming of her constant Jack."

As Charles ran on in this way, more with the kind view of relieving the deep fears he saw so plainly expressed in his father's countenance, than with any solid belief himself, that the affair was likely to have any such favourable termination, he dashed through his toilet with the rapidity that belonged to all his actions, and in a few minutes was leading the way down stairs.

"Would to heaven, Charles, we might find this matter no worse than you make out."

"Never fear, sir; it's just like one of these sailor's tricks—I know them so well. First, they will go to sea, whether you like it or not; then they find out they've got hold of a deucedly bad bargain; next they run away on the first opportunity, come into a quiet family, play the devil's delight at home, make love to all the girls in the neighbourhood, get up a mutiny among the servant-maids, and when they've thrown everything into the most utter confusion, you go off to find the general disturber, and discover him ensconced in some snug corner, with his hand in his breeches' waistband, enjoying the best of whatever's going, and when you begin to express your wonder, he says something markedly uncivil to your eyes, and tells you what weak nerves you've got, not to take things more coolly. But stay, before we set off, we'll go and call Dick Doubtful, and ask him to follow us. In a case of this sort, Dick's invaluable. His judgment and good sense are unfailing, and he never allows his fancy to outrun discretion, or a single point to escape without examination. It's true I have to bully him, now and then, for splitting hairs, yet Dick's a capital lawyer and most useful auxiliary. Which is his room? next but one to mine, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Oh, here we have it; come in; let's draw the blind up; that will wake him. Now, just look at the careless fellow. Hang me, if he has not got into bed, and gone fast asleep, with his black cloth waistcoat on. View his hat, too, stuck on his pillow, with one of his stockings hanging out of it, and no doubt the other's still on his leg; and here's a volume of La Place stuck under his pillow. So like the man! Dick—Dick, you lazy rascal, jump up."

In an instant Dick was on the floor, with one stocking on, as Charles had prophesied.

"What's the matter, Charles.—Ah, my lord! I hope I see you well. Has anything happened?"

"Yes; my brother and cousin have had a fall out, and the latter is missing!"

"Indeed!—Indeed!—That's rather awkward—isn't it? But stay; let us see how this is!"

Dick first pushed one hand through his dishevelled locks, and then

placed the tip of one forefinger on the point of the other, in a style peculiar to himself, when about to dissect an argument to its most subtle depths.

"No, no; I can't stay a moment," replied his impetuous brother of the robe, as soon as he saw this demonstration on Dick's part.

"But my dear fellow," replied Dick, "I should certainly doubt—"

"Of course you would—you always do. It's only going again at your old story; but I won't hear a single doubt you have to express, or you'll go on till you raise the question, whether doubt itself be doubting; and cite cases, on circumstantial evidence, that would last from now till then, and back again; beginning, no doubt, with that everlasting, never-dying, ever-to-be-remembered, never-to-be-forgotten case, in the time of lord Hale—a man was supposed to have murdered his niece; Second Pleas of the Crown, page 290, &c. &c. &c.; so make haste, and follow us down the avenue, but take care you don't interfere with the track of blood-drops which, I'm told, you'll find in the centre." And away he went, without giving Dick, who was a person of grave deportment, a moment's time to express any opinion that might reconvey Sir Job to that state of apprehension, from which Charles' assumed coolness had rescued him, only to feel the weight transferred to his own mind.

As they descended the stairs, the early rays of a December sun enabled both plainly to see the fatal track, which led down to the front door, hence following it out on the snow, they pursued the line in the direct course which Corkindale had mentioned, till it crossed the hedge, at some little distance from the lodge gates, and directed its course towards the village.

At this instant they heard Dick Doubtful's voice shouting in their rear; he soon came up, and they all went forward together. The trail on which they were proceeding, now suddenly turned down to the beach, and winded along towards some secluded rocks, a spot which had not the best reputation. After proceeding onwards a few hundred yards, the tract was lost in a general disturbance of the sand and snow, as if a violent trampling had taken place by more than one man, at least; and, indeed, the place bore the marks of a regular conflict. It was plentifully sprinkled over with blood, and partly washed by the sea, which, there being spring tides, seemed to have come up since the affray, and obliterated all further trace. The three paused for some minutes, and were mournfully discussing these appearances, each afraid to confess the extent of his own thoughts, and wondering whether these footsteps hadn't been continued round the rocks, which the state of the water now rendered inaccessible. Presently, Sir Job said, "What is that?" pointing to a dark rugged object, which appeared to have been buried in the sand, and partially washed out again by the tide.

"See if you can extricate it from the surrounding sand, Charles," continued the old knight, unable himself to approach it from extreme agitation.

"Why, it's woollen," said Charles, complying with the request

made to him, and dragging the soaked clothes to light, there appeared a torn soiled jacket, with mother of pearl buttons.

"Know you not whose that is?" inquired the father, shading his eyes from the sight as he spoke. Neither of the young men attempted to answer him, for both distinctly remembered to have seen that very article of dress, only the night before, on the person of poor Jack Periwinkle, who, full of glee and happiness, sat amidst the cheerful circle, amusing all with jokes and stories from his sea life.

In a romp at blind man's buff, only a few hours before, he had accidentally torn the cuff from one of the sleeves, which Nora had replaced with pins. There lay the cuff before them, pinned precisely as they had observed it at supper. The sand upon it was dyed of the same red hue as the chamber in which he had gone to rest, and in turning it over, to see if it bore any other marks, two large stabs were observed in the left breast, and the other sleeve was wanting; while, in lifting it from the ground, to lay it on a dry part of the beach, there became disentangled from it an open clasp knife, which fixed with a spring, and was covered with blood also. At Charles' desire, Doubtful picked this up, and there, on a silver plate upon the handle, was engraved, at full length, the name of—PAUL PERIWINKLE.

Surprise and horror seemed to render Charles utterly speechless. So little had he imagined anything of this nature could possibly have arisen, that even now he seemed unable to believe it. Poor Sir Job bent his steps back towards his house, like one who was heart-broken by some sudden stroke of calamity and shame. On the road back was also espied one of Paul's shoes. Doubtful endeavoured to suggest subjects for comfort, and grounds to question whether their suspicions might not have taken a wrong direction; but the proofs were so strong, that they had already overcome his own belief, and therefore left him but a poor chance of arguing against that of others. No reply was moreover made to his well-intended arguments, and by degrees he lapsed into a silence as deep as that of his friend.

"What course, Mr. Doubtful, do you consider I ought to pursue, with regard to rendering Mr. Paul Periwinkle up to justice, on the grounds that have come to my knowledge?" inquired Sir Job, as they drew near to the house. But before Dick could frame a reply, one of Sir Job's servants stepped out from the side of the avenue, saying, "Please, my lord, in your absence a warrant has come here from Admiral Acorn, to apprehend Mr. Paul, on suspicion of murdering his cousin, John; we wouldn't let the officers take him till you came back, sir, and we've got the carriage out in readiness."

Had a thunderbolt fallen at Sir Job's feet, he could not have more suddenly altered in his whole bearing; pride and rage seemed to fill his soul to the last pitch of endurance, and in the tempest of the moment even his grief was forgotten. Nor was the matter without a great share of awkwardness for Doubtful, to whom old Acorn stood in the near and double relation of uncle and trustee.

Between the admiral and the alderman had long raged a feud of

most unmitigated ferocity, exacerbated to a fearful extent since the alderman had been made Lord Mayor. The causes of this we will explain hereafter; but Acorn having learnt, through some extraordinary channel, what had happened at the Grange, took this step as the surest means, and certainly also a somewhat remorseless one, of making his old enemy participate in the grief of the Douglas, who, stricken at Chevy Chase, seemed to find the bitterest pang of death in the fact, "Earl Percy sees me fall."

But Sir Job's good sense soon came to his aid; "Pitiful, decrepid old despot," he muttered. The wisest thing, after all, for a father so cruelly placed is, to take no part in such a measure. "Tell the constables," addressing the servant, "when they've finished their refreshment, they have only to consult their own duty and the feelings of their prisoner." Then sending a request to Lieutenant Envee, to allow his men to search the rocks for the body, as soon as the tide went down, Sir Job retired to his room.

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## CHAPTER THE THIRD.

### WHICH PUTS IN SOME OF THE SUBORDINATE BUT NECESSARY PARTS OF THE PICTURE.

While the unfortunate prisoner is being conveyed for examination to the residence of the testy Admiral Acorn, it will conduce to the better understanding of the reader, if we detain him a few minutes with a little more precise detail of the characters and persons of the parties to our story than we have yet had breathing time to afford.

The night before the fatal morning which thus converted into a day of the deepest woe a festival usually so merry as that of Christmas, few families seemed less threatened by calamity, more favoured by fortune, or more thankful for those favours. Supper had been served in the great oak hall; and the servants having retired to the entertainments provided for them in their own quarters, Sir Job sat with all his family and sisters around, the very picture of virtue, hospitality, and happiness. In his front blazed and roared that most cheering and delightful even of English fires, the yule log, a vast pile of ash and holly, well backed by huge layers of oak, in a fire-place whose capacity recalled the oldest and best time of "merrie England;" while the additional comfort and refinements which were added to its rude hospitality, spoke also of the improvements of more modern days. Large iron dogs, modelled from the life, of two favourite bull-terriers, and kept perfectly bright, supported the burning stack on either side; and oaken seats, beautifully carved and stuffed, filled up each of these recesses, time-honoured by the name of chimney-corner. Two sprites of wondrous guise, boldly sculptured in the same wood, extended their wings and arms in form of a roof, as if to sup-

port the chimney; and the space enclosed by the latter served as the vent through which the fragrant smoke eddied.

In one of these seats on the left of the fire, sat the young sailor, Jack, and inside him, in the extreme nook, young Nora Creina, the orphan child of Sir Job's only brother. Her uncommon personal beauty, and melancholy story, seemed to have drawn from her uncle a degree of attachment, stronger, if such a thing were possible, than that which he felt for his own children.

Till nearly eight years old, she had been brought up by her father, who was a widower, long residing, and ultimately murdered, for some real or believed political offence, in one of the wildest parts of the South of Ireland. With some slight traces of her country yet lingering on her lip, her countenance at once bespoke that land which seems to concentrate the beauty of its daughters into fewer specimens, for the purpose of rendering them more exquisite in themselves, and resistless by others; a noble forehead, a complexion transparent almost to a fault, large deep blue eyes, and a profusion of the darkest hair, were added to a form most symmetrically proportioned, with advantages of mind scarcely less conspicuous or decided: still you could not regard her for a moment without being struck by the expression of deep melancholy that seemed to pervade her features—a singular circumstance that has more than once been remarked in those whose after-lives have experienced a more than ordinary share of human trials.

A narrower observer of circumstances might, perhaps, have found a readier solution of this appearance, by watching the furtive glances that occasionally stole from beneath the eyelids of the young sailor sitting next her, whose face, tanned by an Indian sun, and naturally dark, offered the deepest contrast to her own. It might, too, have been observed by accident, that while pretending most affectionately to nurse Lady Periwinkle's dog on the lady's knee and his own, something very like a hand of Jack's clasped one of the young Nora's.

In the opposite corner sat Lady Periwinkle herself, a tall damsel of a very certain age, with considerable rouge, high cheek bones, and the greatest dignity. Indeed, no poor idea will be gained at once of her character and person, when we say that Counsellor Charley, her son-in-law, for she was Sir Job's second wife, generally called her Lady Macbeth, which she took to be a very great compliment,—"Though," she was heard to remark, "with regard to that leddy's moral character, I have heard it surmised she was not altogether canny; and though I have na' read the play myself, yet if all that Mr. Shakespeare says of her is true, she must have been a shocking blackguard;" a term by which her ladyship was always pleased to express her opinion of the worst faults in her sex.

She had, however, her good points; and provided her family wore flannel, and went at least twice to church on Sundays, held up their heads, regarded the proprieties of sayings and doings, and Sir Job kept up his cellar of old port wine, there were many worse people in the world than Lady Periwinkle. On her right hand sat her favourite

daughter, Julia; a little gem, well worthy of being a favourite with any one. Her face was one perpetual picture of harmless delight; and though her younger promise could not compare with her cousin's more matured beauty, yet Lady Periwinkle "prophecied"—here followed three nods of the head, but what her ladyship prophecied she never told any body, which is certainly the wisest way of doing it. Beside Julia sat her brother, Paul Periwinkle, abstracted and silent; his gaze steadfastly fixed on the sparkling pile before him, or only lifted for a few seconds to glance hurriedly and in no slight agitation, at his cousins, Nora and her too happy companion. In this occupation was engaged one whose appearance was the strongest contrast to that of every person in the room; for while a feeling of happiness and satisfaction mantled over the face of all present, with the exception of Paul, the guest we are describing fixed at intervals, when he fancied himself unseen, a look of such intense hatred and malice on the lovers, and more especially Jack, as might well have curdled the blood of an observer. A broad lowering face, in which the worst ravages of the small-pox and traces of the mulatto were equally evident, little deep set twinkling eyes, brows singed away by gunpowder, a "villainous low forehead," and strait black hair, here and there streaked with grey, combined with a small pug nose, and a large thin-lipped mouth, turned down at the corners, to point out a man with whom no prudent person would willingly venture down a dark lane at night. But still he styled himself a man of honour; and on occasions, if nobody were likely to contradict him, talked loudly of vindicating it to his sovereign and brother officers—for he too was an officer—Lieutenant Envee of the pressgang, with a build of figure sufficiently powerful to back up and encourage any plan likely to be engendered in such a head. Placed in command of a station in the neighbourhood, he was among the first to pay his respects to Sir Job, when the rich alderman, two years since, purchased the old Grange of Berrylea, a sort of trysting-spot for his commercial soul; where a few weeks holiday, spent in sight of a Briton's idol, the sea, and refreshed by the breezes of the Channel, sent him back to 'Change stringent as a tariff, and sharp as a bill-broker.

Now there was one idea in Sir Job's mind, most aptly carried out by nature in his huge body, and this was—British. If a matter was not *British*, it was nothing. Towards this grand stream flowed every little tributary that irrigated his capacious soul. He was a Protestant, because it was British; he loved his wife and family—they were all British; it was British so to do. In the same spirit did he eat, drink, sleep, and hate the French, the four great necessaries of a Briton's life. He swore most fervently—aye, and what's more, believed it too, that one Englishman could thrash three Frenchmen; it was a true British principle, and ought to be upheld. Moreover, he had a vast variety of arguments to show that whatever had been done, at whatever place, and in whatever time, was done by—The ancient Britons. Did any one inadvertantly let fall a hint that his country had formerly been conquered by the foreign power of Rome,

he blushed at their ignorance; it was but a mere family-visit, or quarrel—for these two were generally much thé same, he observed. Æneas and Caractacus were cousins, somewhat removed, 'twas true, but yet sprung from the same branch. Even the far back Phœnicians were but a colony from our mother-country; and the very Jews themselves, merely the descendants of some expatriated Druids, slightly altered by time and change of climate.

By what extreme dexterity he managed to reconcile those patriotic notions with some other little credences of his, was a point on which no one ventured to examine his lordship. Like the rest of the ancient Britons, Sir Job Periwinkle was hot and hasty, and would have thought much less of kicking an offender from Dan to Beersheba, than travelling the same distance. Everything about him was in the same keeping, his house, horses, dogs, children, servants —even his very oaths were ancient British to the back bone. As a proof, moreover, of his sincerity, and that his patriotism could stand that harshest test, self-interest, there was not a collector in the country, from the extreme of window-lights to the abyss of poors'-rates, but was sure of instant payment, a ready smile, and a bumper of port, on the *first time of calling!* mark that, good reader. If that be not great, where is grandeur to be found? The port encouraged the British commerce with Portugal, and what in the world was half so British as taxation?

These being the integral principles of Sir Job's character, he no sooner learnt that the British officer in command had sent in his pasteboard, than he instantly returned the visit in person; went over the guard-room of the station; expressed his great delight; and gave the lieutenant a cordial invitation to dine at the Grange.

The first resolution which presented itself to the mind of Envee, on the acquisition of this unexpected acquaintance, was, that the wealthy cit should get him his promotion. He had not, however, been many minutes in the drawing-room of Lady Periwinkle, before he became cognizant of the fact of that majestic dame having herself a son in the navy, and that this young hopeful would prove a perfect absorbent of all the family interest at the admiralty.

While deeply deploring in his soul this contre temps, and pondering in what other way he could turn to account what he conceived to be the simple nature of the cit, there entered Sir Job's niece, Nora Creina. At the first glance, her striking beauty made as deep an impression as anything could do on such a nature, and he soon discovered her to be a great favourite with the knight. As there were no bounds either to the vanity or avarice of Envee, he at once determined that Nora should be his wife. No doubt she would have a rich fortune, and be a much more desirable acquisition than mere promotion. From that day forward, all his plans were directed to this issue.

Nor was he one to frustrate his own schemes by any inadvertent step, any haste, oversight, or ebullition of personal feeling. He soon perceived how much he was detested as a suitor. This merely led him to vow ample revenge. Neither would he allow his admiration of Nora's beauty to lead him into such decided attentions, as might by

her be considered sufficiently annoying for complaint. He saw that he had two formidable rivals in Paul Periwinkle and the absent Jack, who was then at sea; that the former of these was as much formed in person to inspire love, as he himself was to affright it; while Jack, by all accounts, possessed some charms of form, or mind, or manner, which had kept pace with those of Paul himself. Still his modest self-reliance never forsook him. He trusted to the chapter of accidents. Jack might be drowned or shot, or both, and Paul might be jockeyed. In the meantime, a better house than the Grange of Berrylea never yet offered for any short-paid officer to play the tame lion in, so he stuck to Sir Job and the ancient Britons, heard all his long stories, fostered all his prejudices, praised everything to him belonging, and when any story of the French was to be attested, played the part of clerk to lawyer Stubbs, a worthy solicitor in the neighbourhood, who, to all his briefs for counsel, invariably appended this *nota bene*—

"If a witness is wanted to prove any other facts in this case, call my clerk—Tom Affidavit.

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## CHAPTER THE FOURTH,

### HOW THE MAN OF WAR KEPT WATCH AND WARD OVER THE MAN OF MURDER.

To the amiable officer described in the last chapter, was committed, as we have seen, the task of searching for the remains of the unfortunate Jack Periwinkle. The moment after the request had been received, every man in the lieutenant's command was ordered off to pace the beach and rocks, and pass by no cranny where the remains of a human being might be secreted. Evening, however, closed in, and no such discovery had been made.

In the meantime, Paul Periwinkle had been carried off in his father's carriage, by three constables, to the residence of Admiral Acorn. Everything around this specimen of the old school bespoke the officer. A high and heavy stone wall ran round the whole domain, to which access could only be had through a pair of strong oak gates, covered with large copper nails, and flanked by a postern of similar appearance. When the carriage drew up, and entrance was demanded, a small grated port-hole was let down inside one of the gates, and a weather-beaten old phiz appeared to scrutinize its character, and demand "What craft is that?" This being satisfactorily answered, the gates were slowly unbarred by the old seaman, the purposes of whose right hand were answered by an iron hook, worn bright by continual use. Paul was then driven past two formidable nine-pounder long-guns, which had been taken by the admiral in some prize, and were now planted on either side, to command the entrance. The road up to the house, to which old Singlefin made haste to follow, was so contrived, that it seemed to go over every inch of the small quantity of land in-

closed; now they came in sight of the castle, and now again it was lost, till at last they found themselves at the gangway, as the admiral termed his front door, which Singlefin had gained before them. So, if a winding avenue is of no other use, it enables one servant to officiate both at the lodge gate and the hall door. When the unhappy Paul looked from the carriage window, his heart sank within him; and, in truth, there was much in the prison-like appearance of Acorn Castle that might have struck upon the nerves of many wholly free from so fearful a position as that in which he was situated. The building was very high, of an octagon shape, and an order of architecture so gloomy, it might have puzzled the Goths. Situated on a somewhat marshy piece of ground, with a small river running at its back, a deep broad moat had been cut all round it, lined with brick, and flooded. The communication across this was effected by a drawbridge, so narrow that only one person could pass at a time. The drawbridge, also, was of such an ingenious plan, that any one attempting its passage with hostile intentions, could at once be plunged, despite of all resistance, into the moat. Instead of lifting up, the bridge simply drew in by machinery in the lower part of the castle, the walls of which, at that point, descended perpendicularly into the moat, without any ledge, resting-place, or projection whatever, so that the passenger would have found his support gliding from under his feet, without the possibility of helping himself.

On a level with the ground, were a tier of round port-holes, painted black, through which protruded the muzzles of eight guns, similar to those at the gate. This room was called by the admiral his lower-deck; beneath was the cellar and magazine; the floor above, containing the dining-room and kitchen, was the middle-deck; the next, containing the drawing and bed-rooms, was the main-deck; and over these, the leads were surrounded by a high parapet wall, and formed, in the nautical parlance of the builder, waist, poop, and forecastle, in the middle of which rose a huge flagstaff, displaying to the admiring world a union jack, now half mast high, in token of mourning, for the death of what old Acorn termed his signal officer—a huge Newfoundland dog, that allowed no stranger to approach, without setting up a terrific howl. Who or what it was the admiral expected to attack in this marine fortification, no one could ever well make out, though it was equally certain that it was somebody, since he had for ever on his tongue a mysterious language, compounded chiefly of—"The Enemy—gun-boats—land-sharks—sharp look out—row guard—sleeping at quarters—on the weather bow," and many other expressions of equally warlike nature. Some folk were ill-natured enough to say, that "the enemy" meant the ladies, for since the death of his wife, with whom he had long lived most unhappily, no one had ever seen a petticoat within the gates; whoever the enemy might be, however, the gallant officer had provided most amply for their reception, since, in addition to the defences I have named, every story was arched, or bomb-proof, and the walls of proportionate thickness, being faced chiefly with black flints, so interspersed with white, as to resemble the checquered sides of a man of war.

But however curious the den might be, it was nothing to the dragon who resided in it, and into whose presence Paul Periwinkle was now led by the three constables. At first, the prisoner was surprised to find himself in a bed-room, and, looking round, could perceive no one but his own guards.

"Who goes there?" presently demanded a gruff voice from behind the curtains of a queer-looking tent-bed.

"The prisoner, admiral," replied the constables. Here the animated bed took to a violent fit of coughing, and as soon as this was subsiding, the same gruff voice was heard at intervals contending with it, and crying out, with much energy, "D—— your eyes, I say, Mr. Cough, for a son of a sea-cook of a cough, as you are. Where is this murdering ruffian? Let me bring my top-lights to bear on him. John, brail up the awning." Here another seaman, whom Paul had not yet observed, so utterly motionless had he been standing on the other side of his master's bed, drew aside the curtains by a string, and there, large as life, sat Admiral Acorn.

On his head he wore a huge cocked hat, of the true old style, fiercely placed athwart-ships, while, sticking out before, was the fly of a night-cap. A large blue boat-cloak, lined with red, was secured around his throat by a silver clasp, while, on his counterpane, lay four enormous pistols.

The couch on which this son of Mars reposed, was, as we have said before, of the kind denominated a tent-bed, having a round canopy at the head, from whence the curtains depended, and fastened to the wall by a regal crown. Under this canopy was suspended, on two brass hooks, a heavy naked cutlass, which, from its position, seemed to threaten the owner much more than anybody else. On the right, was the model of the ship which the admiral had last commanded, and round the room was hung prints of his battles, actions, and engagements, with many other naval reminiscences equally dear.

The constables, who seemed to have the most perfect knowledge of his worship's peculiarities, now placed Paul in the middle of the room, at the foot of the admiral's bed, and stood back, "a grisly row," before the door. Old Acorn, whose face exhibited a curious admixture of all the sternness of discipline and command, induced over a character of considerable fun and drollery, now eyed the prisoner for a few seconds in grim silence, and then, without moving a muscle, gave the command—

"Blowhard! pipe to quarters!"

"Aye, aye, sir," replied Blowhard in the same gruff key, and whipping out from his waistband a silver whistle that was suspended round his neck, he produced a sound that re-echoed through the room, till Paul thought the tympanum of his ear was gone for ever, while the noise might distinctly have been heard throughout the castle, for Blowhard, having been promoted from the post of the admiral's coxswain, to hold "a brown paper warrant," as boatswain of a seventy-four, liked a touch of his old art as well as his master. As soon as the shrill tempest had subsided, old Acorn's lips once more moved.

"Load with ball!"

Forth flew a small drawer at the touch of the obedient Blowhard, and displayed inside two divisions, one filled with blank cartridges, and the other with musket balls. Taking out four of the first, the end of each was regularly bitten off, and one rammed down into each pistol, four leaden bullets were then in like manner added.

"Prime!" said the admiral.

Blowhard primed, and as he did so to each deadly weapon, he laid it down, at half cock, on the admiral's bed, the handles of all being thus left within convenient reach of the old warrior's hand, and the threatening muzzles pointing full on the person of poor Paul.

Now the best part of Paul's life had been spent in the counting-house of his father, to whom he was always intended to be the fortunate successor and sole prop—the young Astyanax of the ledger. But though, like Sir Job, it was thus intended that he should shine forth as a substantial iron-master, yet none of his family ever contemplated that his contact with cold iron should be anything like so close as it was at present. In truth, he had not learn't the art of what naval men call "standing fire." Though possessed of much courage, both moral and personal, he did not therefore feel altogether comfortable when he beheld his repose thus threatened by the loaded barrels of four pistols, with the virtue of whose rusty locks he was by no means so satisfied as not to believe that a sudden movement of the admiral's legs might at any moment cause one or more to go off at half-cock.

Dejected as he was, he was seriously meditating a remonstrance, when the flag-officer addressed the myrmidons of the law, who, like cautious men, were hugging the wall most strenuously, to keep out of the line of fire.

"The constables may retire."

In a twinkling open flew the door, and the last rag of the constable's coat vanished down the stairs.

"Well, youngster," resumed the admiral, in a most admonishing growl, "I suppose you know you're in the presence of one of Her Majesty's justices of the peace?"

Paul eyed the loaded pistols at the last words, but wisely held his tongue.

"And a rear-admiral of the red," concluding the sentence. "Now, d'ye see, it's a very serious thing this you've been about---a d——d serious affair altogether. Murdering your brother—"

"Not his brother, your honour, he's only up here now upon a charge of skivering a cousin, or the like of that."

"Oh! a cousin is it, Blowhard? very good. Well, youngster, it's all the same, d'ye see, in the articles of war aloft. Whoso murdereth his brother—ahem—Is it murdereth or killeth, Blowhard?"

"Killeth, your honour, as dead as mutton."

"No, it isn't, you lubber! How can it be? One man may kill another on an occasion, as in battle, for instance."

"Right, your honour! I made a bit of a mistake there; so it must be murdereth."

"To be sure it is, you swab. So, prisoner, d'ye see, whoso mur-

dereth his brother—I—I can't give ye the exact words of the article as the chaplain could, may-be, if he was here; but I'm sure, youngster, you must know as well as I do, that you've done a—a very heinous—a—very—terribly heinous——In short, sir, you've put your foot in it; so look out for squalls!"

"Really, I assure you, Admiral—"

"Not a word, prisoner—not a word. As justice of the peace, I never allow of interruption;" and in an instant the admiral had in his hand one of the aforesaid pistols, whose threatening muzzle looked so ominous in Paul's eyes, that he remained mute as a mummy till the address from the bench should be finished. When the admiral saw he was quiet, he proceeded—

"What I have to say, youngster, is this: If you have anything to tell in your defence, it shall all be taken down presently. I've written to a brother magistrate to come over and assist me in holding the necessary court of inquiry on your case; and I've sent my clerk off with the despatch: and as I'm no lawyer—God be praised! myself, and hate all those that are, I shall have nothing farther to do in the matter till the court is ready to sit. In the meantime, I've thought it my duty to the king's peace, d'ye see, to have you apprehended; as it appears to me it's neither delicate nor ship-shape that a father should have the custody of a son guilty of such a blood-thirsty crime as you have been. If you and your cousin, who, I understand, have fallen out about a wench, had had a fair stand-up fight, and exchanged some five or six and twenty rounds of ball-cartridge, or so, and an accident had then happened to the lad, why, I shouldn't have had a word to say about it, tho'f it might have been a little awkward to your friends; but to 'kill men i' the dark,' as the great Admiral Benbow* says, is neither ship-shape nor Bristol fashion; so you're apprehended for murder. And now hear what I have to say: The only proper stow-hold that I have in this stone ribbed craft, for a criminal like you, is the lower deck; but as it's full of arms, and I see you're a regular blood-thirsty young Turk, I sha'nt trust you down there, where you may get foul of some of my people, who are not quite so active as they used to be; for old Blowhard there, ye see, has lost a leg, and Singlefin is minus an arm. Now, though it has pleased God to lay me up with a most d——le attack of the gout—" Here a sudden twinge seemed to give a very lively notion of the fact to the invalid; "yet, d'ye see, if you go to windward of me, why, I'll forgive ye. So, till the clerk comes back, I shall keep you here in limbo; and if you make a single effort to come the old soger over me, and get away, all I say is, you may safely trust Bob Acorn for blowing your brains out, youngster, d'ye hear?—Blowhard! lash the prisoner's hands."

"Please your honour, may I step below for a few fathoms of half-inch rope?"

"Rope, you lubber! haven't you got such a thing as a piece of rope, without going below? I wish, for your sake, Master Blowhard, I

* Shakespeare puts the words in the mouth of Iago; but Benbow is near enough, it seems, "on an occasion."

was able to get out of dock, I'd not only give you a rope, but a good rope's ending. However, since you are such a blockhead, step on the chair by my bed-side, and cast loose the spare bell-rope; that'll do as well as the best.—Now, 'way aloft!"

"Aye, aye, sir;" and obedient to the word, the tar proceeded to mount; but the room being very lofty, he was obliged to step on the extreme back of the chair, and as a wooden leg is not the most manageable of understandings, he just contrived to effect his object, when, making a stumble, he was under the necessity, in order to save his own person, of leaving the bell-rope to shift for itself. This it accordingly did, by falling, as a matter of course, right on the gouty toe of Admiral Acorn.

"Murder and Irish!" cried the irritable old officer, shrieking with the excessive pain, and striking out right and left at Blowhard under the ribs, till he made the boatswain dance again. In the meantime, the sudden and unequal motion of the counterpane caused three of the loaded pistols to fall on the floor, two of which, striking on their long-used locks, went off, bang, bang, in rapid succession, sending their balls whistling and racketting about the room, and making Paul skip a minuet with the boatswain.

"You rascal!" cried the admiral, taking no more notice of this discharge than if it had been quite regular, and shaking the remaining pistol at Blowhard's head all the while, "I've a very good mind to shie this at that thick numskull of yours, for your pains. I do believe, you lubber," rubbing his offended shin with the other hand, and muttering the most fearful oaths, "that because you have the luck to possess a timber toe yourself, you think there *is no* such a thing as gout in the world!—all sham, I suppose—all sham! I wish to my soul you had it."

"Ax your honour's pardon a thousand times, sir," muttered old Blowhard, giving the admiral as wide a berth as possible, and knowing the less he said the better; so, quickly lashing Paul Periwinkle's hands, and re-loading the discharged pistols which seemed to have alarmed none of the household below, he awaited further orders.

"Now, you lubberly swab!" resumed his superior, when his wrath had in some degree given itself vent, "give me the other end of that bell-rope with which you've lashed the prisoner. So; that'll do. Now place a table at the foot of my bed—that's it—a little more to the right; move it square by the lifts and braces—belay—that'll do. Now, youngster, bring yourself to an anchor on the top of that table."

"But, really, admiral—"

"Mount, I say, this instant, sir, without a word!" catching up a pistol again.

Paul got on the table without delay.

"Now, sir, sit down, face towards me."

Paul obeyed.

"Now, mind, youngster," hauling taut the bell-rope, "that's your post for the next two hours; and if I catch you attempting to cut

and run, you may as well beat the muster-roll for your brains; for, depend upon it, I shall let daylight in upon them."

As the warlike justice of the peace said this, he put his weapon at full cock, and once more levelled it at the head of the prisoner; screwing up one eye all the while, in order to take the most unerring aim with the other, while in the effort a fourth pistol fell down. Paul, in the meantime, who had seen him, in his hasty carelessness, seize one of the identical fire-arms that had discharged itself upon the floor, became apprehensive, as he well might, that the lock, thus faulty, would go off when the admiral least intended it, and so endeavoured, by ducking his head, and throwing up his legs, to get out of the range of the ball, and cover himself from the blast of the powder; urgently remonstrating, all the while, upon the total absence of any necessity for this warlike demonstration.

To this no reply was made by the admiral, who seemed far from insensible to the amusement of his part in the scene, while old Blowhard, in obedience to his master's orders, now hobbled off; tipping a broader grin and wink to the unfortunate Paul as he passed, and knowingly holding up, as he went out of the room, his stumpy forefinger to his long red nose.

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## CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

Conformably with the wish expressed by Sir Job Periwinkle, and fully shared by his son, Charles, every effort was made to keep from the knowledge of Nora the disastrous events which had happened in her family; and in which, however innocently, she was supposed to have acted as a powerful cause. For this purpose, a strict blockade was instituted round the chamber of herself and Julia, who must inevitably have suffered much misery, on hearing such an accusation; which might yet be cleared up.

Lady Periwinkle herself, on hearing what had happened, though not particularly given to the ailments of weak nerves, was evidently too much, and too powerfully, affected, not to betray the secret should she see her daughters. Her long-tried lady's-maid, therefore, Mrs. M'Larry, was entrusted with full powers to do or say anything she thought fit, provided only she could succeed in confining the young ladies to their chambers, which opened, *en suite*, with a dressing-room between. This she undertook to effect. Their own maid, who slept in Miss Julia's room, was inveigled away before she herself had obtained any knowledge of what was passing in the house; and the young ladies were boldly assured by the veracious M'Larry, that one of the under-housemaids had been attacked by a fever, and that, until the doctor could pronounce what it was, whether small-pox or scarletina, it was the particular injunction of Sir Job and Lady Periwinkle, that both the beauties should undergo quarantine.

At the frightful vision of the small-pox, the harmless little inno-

cents asked no further questions than the name of the sufferer, when she was taken ill, how she felt, who attended her, &c.; and then calling for their mirrors, looked intuitively to see if any hectic herald appeared upon their cheeks; wondered if the infection could travel through closed doors, and mutually protested against any more stimulating diet than chicken broth. All these cogitations and predisposing credulities, M'Larry took good care to improve to the utmost; and clenched the whole affair with delivering a most affectionate message.—

"Both Mr. Paul and Mr. John desired their kind luves, and hoped the leddies wouldna' suffer themselves to be alarmed, as in a day or two, at furthest, a' might be weel."

Every sound of the confusion, which really did exist in the Grange, so far from leading to an eclaircissement, only tended the more fully to rivet the delusion that had been put upon them; and while Sir Job and Lady Periwinkle, with hearts nearly broken, thought only of the cloud that had so suddenly darkened all their happiness, and wearied heaven with prayers for its aversion, these two young beings, so deeply interested in the event, were occupied in sending messages of kindness and sympathy to an imaginary invalid, all of which M'Larry pretended to have delivered, and of which she duly reported the answers she feigned to have received.

In the meanwhile, Admiral Acorn's brother justice arrived; a gentleman of large possessions in the county, deputy-lieutenant, and colonel of the local militia. Sir Job was requested to attend their meeting, and bring with him any of his servants who could speak to the facts of the case. Every circumstance that has been already laid before the reader, was then elicited in evidence, but though it made out a case of very strong and terrible suspicion, it amounted to no more. No body was found—no one had seen the absent man—all clue to his discovery appeared lost.

One or two of the villagers who lived nearest to the lodge-gates of Berrylea, came forward, and deposed to having heard some cries on the night in question; but they were so confused in their accounts as to time, that little or no dependance could be placed on their impressions. Under these circumstances, Colonel Barton considered it would be their duty to remand the prisoner till further lapse of time should decide whether any more pregnant proof was forthcoming, for or against him.

Admiral Acorn expressed his belief, that it was as full a case of murder as ever yet was made out, but as the majority of the court were against him, he wouldn't give them the trouble to put it to the vote.

In this manner, then, it was ruled. Paul, whose countenance presented a melancholy mixture of grief, horror, surprise, and irresolution, with that peculiar wildness which is often the result of some overwhelming calamity, obstinately persisted in maintaining the deepest silence on the subject, broken only by his still deeper sighs, and the involuntary murmuring of broken sentences, which could not well be distinguished, except that they every now and then most passionately breathed forth the name of Nora, and betokened the intense

anguish of a mind reflecting on subjects far distant and distinct from those discussed in his presence.

After it was all over, Charles and Doubtful held a long and anxious consultation, as to what course they had better adopt. The room in which they sat, was the hall at Berrylea. Every one seemed to have flown from it, as if not only a fever, but the plague, reigned around. That hearth, formerly so cheerful and so crowded! not one of the beloved and accustomed faces was there to grace it now; even the domestics glided stealthily along the passages, which resounded no more to the bustle of life, or aught but the guarded closing of some door, that seemed to think the slightest noise a treason.

Overhead might be heard, occasionally, the heavy footfall of Sir Job, in his own little library—then came a pause—a deep groan—a few steps more—and then all was still. Doubtful sat with his face averted from the light, in one of the old carved chairs, and opposite to him, in another, Charles buried his head between his hands, trying, for a long while, to hide the tears that slowly trickled through them.

Impetuous, daring, and possessed of coolness in public life, to a degree rarely equalled at his age, long versed in the world, and therefore not easily prone to form deep attachments, yet when these once took root, affectionate to the last, sensitive and open as a child, all his emotions rushed to the surface, as the strongest springs break soonest into daylight; was he angry, no prudence seemed able to restrain his language; did grief affect him in the real depths of his heart, its concealment appeared still less under his control. His quick blue eye, and profusion of light curling hair, seemed to bear out this disposition, and scarcely an emotion of the mind but might be traced almost as soon as it arose, in a countenance not strictly regular in its features, but eminently pleasing, and open as the day.

Still quietly as ever the day wore on, as though human suffering were but a fable and a farce, which we ourselves get up for mutual endurance. Still the sunshine struggled to get through the dense heavy clouds that enwreathed the earth, and permitted only an occasional ray to stream through the many-tinted glories of the old stained window. Still the rooks without, made mournful music to the gale that sighed through the avenue. In fitful murmurs, the long roll of the distant sea still broke upon the ear, as it thundered on the beach and reverberated down the vast old chimney. A hundred years ago the same scene was passing; the same sounds were heard; while sorrows, no doubt equally heavy and unexpected, were raining down their "coals of living fire." Now how peaceful slept the mourners! But reflections such as these, so useful in teaching man the vanity of struggling with his woe, offered not their melancholy solace to the mind of Charles, his thoughts went no farther than yesterday, when the happiness of all around him seemed full to overflowing. He thought of the endeared circle to whom in all probability was now given the cup of woe for years—painfully recalled a beloved relative, swept from all knowledge in a way frightful to contemplate— a favourite brother branded as a murderer. He reflected on the shame, the disgrace, the agony, of a public trial, the ruin, the infamy of a

conviction—possibly a public execution. In a few hours seemed blighted all the hopes, the struggles, the efforts, the sacrifices of his whole life, and by a cause with which he had not the most remote connection.

How could he ever hope to hold up his head in a profession so lately his pride, when every briefless child of envy, might reproach him as the brother of a murderer? with what confidence or consistency could he denounce crime or animadvert upon the law, one of whose nearest relations had been most flagrantly guilty of the worst species of the former, and undergone the severest penalties of the latter. Even supposing that this last was to be averted, yet unless all suspicion were cleared up would not the case be nearly as ruinous?

"Tell me, my dear fellow," said he, unable any longer to bear the misery of his own mind, and rising and hurriedly pacing the hall, "what course had we better pursue? I've thought and thought of it again, until my mind is absolutely maddened, and I think my reason is going. You are comparatively an uninterested spectator. Your judgment is cool and dispassionate. What ought we do?"

"Upon my word it's a very difficult question. Oh! upon my word it's a very nice matter indeed. A very doubtful point to say the best of it."

"Sometimes I think I ought to go and see Paul and implore him to tell me the whole truth that we may know how to act for the best. Then again I think such a step would only add to our confusion, and might very seriously embarrass the whole of us. Sometimes I indulge a strong hope in the utter impossibility of his having been led to this enormity, at other moments, the many concurrent proofs of his guilt overwhelm me absolutely with despair."

"Stay, stay now, never mind; never mind; let these alone while we examine how the case stands. The points that make most in his favour are these—His character throughout life is against any tendency to commit such an act; the mode in which it has been supposed to be done, is so careless, so ill contrived, that detection was inevitable; and thirdly, where is the body?"

"Now, look at the host of facts against him. First as to incentive—Jealousy is a madness so sudden and overwhelming as to have caused the most humane characters to have been plunged into the most inconsistent and atrocious crimes. A mind so unhinged as to commit murder, is rarely composed enough to plan effectively all concealment; a body sunk or thrown into the sea, or hidden among rocks, may long remain undiscovered. Look at the state of agitation in which he was found; his washing his hands and face, and throwing away the water; his declaration of never having quitted the house, yet his clasp knife, a most deadly and improper instrument for any man to possess, found on the shore, covered with blood, and buried with the best part of poor John's jacket—the jacket itself bearing two stabs, that could scarcely fail of being fatal, and corresponding with the blade of this very knife; one of his shoes found on the shore, also covered with blood, and corresponding with the footmarks in the avenue; poor John's shoes left at home in the hall; the bed and bedroom all stained with

gore :—Gracious heaven ! is it not maddening to think that all these proofs are accumulated on the head of a brother ! If the body should be found, what can a jury say to all this ? What can the whole world ? What can even a father, a brother, say to it, but the fatal word ? —*guilty !* Then, added to all, is his own determined obstinacy and utter silence."

"For which we should be very thankful—very thankful, indeed, let me tell you. It is the best part of his case ; at least he has invented no idle defence, which, by breaking down, might make matters hopeless, and the fact of the shoes might be reconciled ; so take this to comfort you in the midst of your distress—that if no body is discovered, he must be discharged, and try if some other country—"

"It can matter little to what country he flies, as far as he is concerned ; he has made his own misery, and must bear it : but even in this, the most favourable termination of this awful calamity, in what a condition will his family be left ! "

"Time is the only leech for wounds like these, my dear fellow ; and the only credit left to the sufferer is that of bearing what it is idle to mourn. I only pray heaven that this affliction may not strike deeper. The case for our consideration. is, what ought you to do now ? My present opinion is, that you ought to remain quiet. Write and retain the services of the attorney-general without delay ; to which I think I would add the two best men at the criminal bar ; for money is of course of no object. I do not think you should go beyond this, at all events, just now. For suppose you obtained his confidence, and he were innocent, you would be just where you are ; while if he confessed being guilty, it would, as you say, embarrass you very greatly. And the only help that any being could render him, that of safe and instant flight, would be utter madness, unless the body be discovered."

"I think you are right. You are a cooler, and a safer judge ; so it shall be as you say. As for myself, no child could feel more lost than I do."

"Never mind, never mind ; we may at least struggle with the storm. Go, try if you can get some sleep. I'll take a turn on the shore, and see if we could have formed a better conclusion."

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## CHAPTER THE SIXTH,

### WHICH CONTAINS SOME UNEXPECTED DISCLOSURES.

Leaving the two friends to execute their various intentions, we must, for a few minutes, return to the prisoner. As soon as it was resolved that he should be remanded, to await any further proofs that might be discovered for or against him, a debate arose as to the proper place for his confinement. It was finally agreed that he should remain at Acorn Castle, with no more restraint placed on his person than was necessary for his safety. To accomplish this, the admiral,

with many a grumble, had all the small arms removed from the lower-deck, a temporary hammock slung between two of the guns, and Paul left at leisure to ruminate, with a few books.

Colonel Barton, on going away, had expressed to the old seaman a strong hope that no possible means of suicide should be left in the prisoner's room.

"Come, come, colonel, let's be a little charitable," returned the old tar; for thof he has pinked his cousin, and may be sunk the hull, in a way which isn't quite of the handsomest, still no man likes the yard-arm—can't say I should myself. So if he has a fancy to make a clean cut of it before, I don't think we need be so oversmart in our duty as to baulk him; for, baiting this affair of a murder, as we call it, I rather think him a well disciplined reasonable chap; and if well brought up, might have made a devilish smart seaman."

For two days matters continued in this state. The family at the Grange began to hope that the worst of their calamity was already known to them. On the afternoon of the third day, however, an arm was discovered among the rocks, clothed in the remainder of the jacket already found; and severed at the shoulder and the wrist, so that the hand was wanting. On being taken to the Grange, it was reluctantly but positively identified; and though much swollen, by lying in the water, the sleeve was carefully ripped off, and there, on the inside of the lower arm, was seen, tattooed in blue figures, the crown and anchor, with the initials, J. P.; marks which John Periwinkle was known to have borne on the left forearm. Scarcely the slightest doubt now seemed to remain. While, however, the shuddering spectators were gazing on in horror, word was brought that a trunk, without either limbs or head, had been cast up on the shore, near the same spot, and answered to the size of John Periwinkle. The state of the unhappy father, on hearing this, was such, that Doubtful kindly suggested the propriety of ordering the seamen by whom it was discovered to take it to the quarters of Lieutenant Envee; offering to attend himself and see if the dissevered shoulder before them corresponded in such a degree as to warrant a belief that they had belonged to one person. Accordingly he did so; and when he saw the mangled edges of the two wounds placed together, the certainty produced in his mind of their former union was such, that he was obliged precipitately to quit the room. No time was now lost in informing Colonel Barton and his colleague of what had taken place; and those gentlemen having inspected the sad remains, expressed a conviction of the identity; and having taken the necessary depositions, made out a committal of the prisoner to the county gaol. Everything being in readiness, the wretched Paul was summoned before them, the finding of his cousin's body detailed, and himself questioned as to what he had to say. Being previously cautioned, however, by Doubtful, much to Acorn's indignation, that whatever he said would be made use of against himself.

On hearing these several facts, no words can do justice to the horror and amazement that gathered in his face.

Three several attempts he made to speak, and at the last had managed to articulate a few words; suddenly the sounds grew faint—

they ceased—his eyes gradually closed, and he fell temporarily lifeless into the arms of Blowhard, who stood beside him.

Every effort made to bring him back to any state of consciousness now seemed perfectly futile. Life returned, it is true; and he was heard continuously uttering some faint sounds—now in prayer to heaven—now in passionate entreaty on Nora Creina---why did she not write to him!---why did she not come to him!---send to him one single word---dear Jack---murdered! and many other incoherent expressions were heard. And in this melancholy state he was placed in a carriage, and conveyed, strongly guarded, to a felon's cell.

The strictest orders having been at the same time issued for a renewed search, by drag-nets, for the other portions of the body, it was suggested that two trawling-boats should drag over every portion of the bay, opposite to where the trunk had been cast up. This was accordingly done; and on the first day was found, at different places, the head; the right arm, with its hand also severed, and the two legs, each of which had been taken from the trunk at the groin. The skull itself presented a sight we must pass over; the shell-fish had begun to attack it, and all trace of feature was gone. The rest of the remains were also sadly disfigured; but one fact stood beyond all doubt—in life they had been part of the same body with the trunk and arm first discovered; and a coroner's inquest being held, found them to be the remains of John Periwinkle; and his cousin, Paul Periwinkle, guilty of his wilful murder.

In the meantime, the excitement produced throughout the country by these terrible details and the time taken in gradually bringing the truth to light, had reached a point altogether unprecedented. Hundreds flocked down daily to the spot where events so shocking had occurred, and might be seen continually strolling on the sands, looking down as if they momentarily expected to discover the only portions of the deceased not yet found—the hands. The rank of the murderer, his mild and attractive person, all gave new interest to the tale. Every species of bad taste was perpetuated in pursuit and indulgence of this sad appetite for the horrible. Not a newspaper was published in the county, or even in the kingdom, which did not contain "some further particulars," some "more minute description," some strong presumption and conviction of the guilt of Paul.

Overwhelmed by the utter intensity of their blow, Sir Job and his wife and son scarcely knew or heeded what was going on without. With every blind in the house drawn down, they remained heart-broken in their own rooms, scarcely speaking or communicating, otherwise than through Doubtful, who, kind as ever, went from one mourner to the other, and, deeply suffering himself, did his utmost to whisper some kind of comfort to all. At last, however, the utmost pertinacity of the servants became scarcely adequate to repulse the rude and vulgar curiosity of some of the visitors to the scene of horror. They invaded the privacy of the grounds in every direction; boldly penetrated beyond the avenue; kept up a perpetual espionage on the house; looked into the hall windows, which descended to the ground; and some of them actually knocked at the door, and offered to the

butler a bribe of five shillings, to exhibit them the room in which, they said, "the murder had been committed."

In the faces of these wretched unfeeling creatures the door was shut, and the bribes were thrown, but the servants grew so irritated, that at last, despite of every entreaty and assurance from Doubtful, that this prying and disgraceful curiosity would soon wear off, the butler informed Sir Job of the fact, and his fears, that unless the family moved, every servant would quit the place.

"I can't wonder at it, Corkindale, replied Sir Job, on hearing these complaints; not at all. God knows it's grievous for any British heart to bear. After what's happened, I'm sure I'm no ways wrapped up in this poor old place, though I've spent many happy hours in it, Corkindale—many—more than I ever shall know again, go where I will." There was a pathos in these words, as the old man uttered them, that went to the heart of the hearer. Then, as if muttering to himself—"But it's no use mourning; there are duties to the living as well as to the dead. 'Absalom! my son! my son! would I had died for thee!' I will arise and eat bread. Corkindale, let the dinner be laid in the hall as usual, and tell your fellow-servants I shall consider their feelings as well as my own—in every probability I shall leave Berrylea immediately."

There is a class of minds, powerful in the extreme in their construction, but which are, nevertheless, occasionally beat down and overthrown; from this stress of soul, however, they seem to arise refreshed, rather than palsied, and with greater energy and decision rather than less. Of this class was the mind of Sir Job Periwinkle. The time for mourning helplessly and hopelessly, was past; the blow was struck; irreparable he beheld it was, but this rendered it more imperative upon him to see that the consequences went no further—that the head of the family which had suffered so dire a misfortune, should assume the air of innocence and fortitude that of right belonged to it.

"We are not, nor can be, answerable for all the errors of those belonging to us. If my unhappy son has offended against the laws, it shall never be said that his father stepped in to avert their just vengeance, or was a helpless repiner against the providence that decreed them. When everything went well with me, I sought to bear myself as a true Briton, and nothing more; now God has been pleased to afflict me, shall I be less.?"

Little had Sir Job been troubled in youth by classic studies, but if for Briton we substitute the name of Roman, what hero of those days, when all were heroes, could have resolved more nobly.

Stifling his sorrows as he best might, he communicated his intentions to Lady Periwinkle, and Doubtful conveyed them to Charles. In sober sadness and deep silence they once more met at table, and when the servants had withdrawn, and the massive polished oak bore that harvest of gleaming bottles in which the hospitable host so lately took delight, he mentioned his intention of leaving Berrylea, and the propriety of endeavouring to break to the poor girls the sad intelligence, that must reach them soonor or later, and for delaying which there was now no sufficient reason.

Indeed, it had become a very pressing question, how much longer the tale so industriously imposed upon them could be maintained. Confined as they were, it was impossible to frame any excuse for keeping their blinds drawn down; and the unusual number of people whom they beheld straying at intervals across the park, and all staring most intensely at their windows, had already attracted their attention, and excited their eager inquiries. Again, they wondered and guessed at the non-appearance of any of the family, more especially Lady Periwinkle, and anxiously demanded whether she herself had been taken ill of the apprehended fever. The female servants in the establishment, headed by their own lady's-maid, had thought fit to take up the matter of their imprisonment, and as the enthusiasm of this class is invariably sure to take a direction the very opposite of that which you wish it to assume, so they one and all declared, that the imposition practised on their young mistresses was a scandal, shame, cruelty, &c. &c. &c., including a long string of enormities. Out of pure compassion and good nature, therefore, they determined that the ladies should be made aware of what had happened, "spite of Mrs. M'Larry and her airs." Actuated by these laudable motives, when the supper-tray was sent up to the young ladies' room, a newspaper, containing an account of everything that had happened, and not in the most cold or unornamented style, was placed between the napkin and the tray, in such a manner that it could scarcely fail to be noticed. When the footman carried up this combustible service of refreshments, he mentioned causually at the door to the wary Mrs. M'Larry, "That a tall handsome gentleman, who had the Scotch accent---slight, very slightly ---had been inquiring for madam to-day at the hall porter, who had told him Mrs. M'Larry was in such close attendance on the young ladies, she could see no one."

Numerous interrogatories were here put by the interested fair one, but Topknot knew nothing more---the hall porter had mentioned nothing more. To lay the tray, and seize the first moment for hurrying below---nothing, she was sure, could occur in her *short* absence---was the unavoidable result on the part of Mrs. M'Larry. She found the hall porter in a mood circumstantial to a nicety.

"The stranger was a very tall gentleman."

"Was he very dark?"

"Yes, ma'am, very dark---had the air of a gentleman who had been a good deal in foreign parts."

"Was he very good-looking?"

"Uncommon good-looking, ma'am---wore a most beautiful coat---and such a riding-whip, mounted with gold knobs."

"Had he a tall black horse?"

"Not with him, ma'am; but his trowsers were so splashed, he must have travelled a long way---looked very much tired---sadly disappointed on hearing Mrs. M'Larry was not to be seen---said something, though he couldn't be heard quite rightly, about going to the village inn---calling to-morrow morning."

"Did he leave no name?"

"No name, ma'am."

"Very strange; but what---"

A shriek, indicative of the greatest agony, and in a female voice, was now heard from the great hall, followed by so violent a ringing of the servants' bells, that every wire in the Grange seemed moving. The servants made a general rush to where the family were sitting. Conscience-stricken at her neglect of duty, and some slight glance at the quick flight of time while she had been questioning the porter, induced Mrs. M'Larry to follow, and there she beheld, kneeling, in tears and the deepest anguish, at the feet of Sir Job Periwinkle, her charge, Miss Nora. With one arm she clasped his knees, whilst with the other she lifted up the fatal paper---

"Is this true?—It cannot be! For God's sake! my dear uncle, speak to me!—Is there one word of truth in it?—Is this the secret of our imprisonment?—Tell me—tell me only one word!" Then looking round with a glance of despair that froze the hearts of the beholders—"Where is my dear cousin John? and Paul—where is Paul? Ah! I see we have been deceived—I see it is all true. Oh, God! why was I not told!" As this torrent of entreaty and imprecation was poured forth, every trace of colour forsook her cheek—the dark fringed lids closed over those brilliant eyes of blue—her hands forsook their clasp—and she fell along the ground, like some exquisite but fragile flower, which the sickled hand of sorrow had laid low, never to bloom more.

"Help! Lady Periwinkle—Julia—Charles—How can this have happened? Mrs. M'Larry, you old fool! how have you neglected;—don't stand staring there. Will you see your mistress die before you?—lift her on a chair. Charles—Corkindale—Mr. Doubtful—run one of you for the doctor—bring him here this instant!"

"I'll go, Sir Job," replied Charles, snatching up his hat, and darting off, accompanied by Dick Doubtful, they made straight for the residence of Doctor Bamboozle.

Now the doctor was one of those numerous excrescences of science, who, not content with possessing a fair quantity of average ability, must further the advance of it by every little species of charlatanism in his power. A part of this system was the affecting the utmost eccentricity, not only in manner, but in dress. He had a clever French face, with a singularly hooked nose corresponding; and some one having accidentally told him of a sort of likeness he bore to Voltaire, this may in all probability have given him the hint of the outre appearance he affected. His dress was always that of the old gentleman—pantaloons, silk stockings, buckles, large shirt and wrist frills, a coat that seemed to have been purloined from the wardrobe of the Great Frederick, a hat like a loaf of sugar, with a broad brim, turned up all round, an amber-headed cane, and invariably, out of doors, a large silk umbrella, hung round his neck by a silver chain—now dangling before, now dangling behind, according to the pleasure and convenience of the wearer.

Whenever questioned as to the reason of this singular custom, his reply was invariably the same—

"That umbrella, good gentleman, is one of the most singular things in nature. It is not my barometer—no, nor even solely my pluviantidor—certainly not. It is more than both, sir. It's my baro-regulator. Whenever I want a fine day, sir, I always hang that umbrella round my neck, and not a cloud ever thinks of breathing its moist influence on that quarter of the land where *I* am. On the other hand; does the earth appear parched? is the grass dying? are the crops famished? and the farmers complaining? I have but to leave that illustrious parapluie at home, and the greater and the lesser rains descend incontinently."

This incongruous mixture, then, of ability and humbug, our friends found quietly reading in his study—a room crammed full of all sorts of preparations and remains, the most remarkable of which was a female skeleton, that wore, by way of ornament, round the bones of the neck and breast, a large gold chain, composed entirely of mourning rings, first severed, and then joined together in links.

When the doctor heard their hasty errand, he quietly arose, and simply muttering to himself, "as well to have a dry walk home and no snow," hung his umbrella round his neck, and walked back with his young companions to the Grange. Here they found Nora in the same chair into which she had been lifted, and nearly in the same state as when Charles left. Julia and Lady Periwinkle, in tears, were plying her with salts; Sir Job was pacing up and down the hall in great distress, and the servants had all been sent away.

As soon as her ladyship beheld the doctor, she took him by the hand, and implored his services. He, without laying down his hat, advanced to his patient, and felt her pulse. It was not easy to discern from Dr. Bamboozle's countenance what was passing in his mind in general, but on this occasion, he looked at his patient—looked, and looked again—and at every glance seemed more and more surprised. He then seemed to trace the course of something over the neck and chest of the beautiful but still senseless girl, laid his hand on her heart, and placed his ear close to the motionless form.

"Has your niece, my lady, been in perfect health lately?" inquired the doctor, with a curious latent smile, that boded little good, for it was known that no one better loved a little amusement at his neighbours' expense.

"I canna' say she has, doctor; she has taken little or no food, nor scarcely any exercise; her spirits, too, have been lost; she's grown, too, a deal paler; and yet I canna' exactly say she has had any very extraordinar' indisposition, except, indeed, that she seems to have a somewhat unhealthy fat, which at her time of life, you know, doctor, shouldna' be."

"Has your niece, do you know, formed any attachment?"

"Why, sir, something of that sort, I fear; for once or twice, since she fell into that state, she has uttered the word, 'husband,' or, 'husband murdered!' though that must be mere raving, yet I believe, sir, there is reason to fear—"

"Ah, ah; I see how it is. I'm very sorry—very awkward—can't help it," and the doctor appeared to be edging off towards the door.

"But, surely, Doctor Bamboozle—is there nothing we can get for her?" cried Sir Job and Lady Periwinkle in a breath, closing round.

"Do you insist upon my answering that question truly?" asked the doctor in reply; but in so low a tone, that only the knight and his lady could hear.

"Undoubtedly we do, sir.—What?—What, sir?"—

"—Some baby-linen, Lady Periwinkle; and that quickly. Your niece's ravings are, unfortunately, no flights of fancy—she must soon become a mother."

"—Out of the room, you scoundrel!—you ignoramus! You lying quack, begone!" vociferated Sir Job, seizing both candles, and ushering out the unfortunate doctor.

"—Aye, you atrocious calumniating creature!" joined in her ladyship, forgetting for a moment all her dignity, in the depths of her anger and surprise; "Is this the way you insult the honour of a family to which you owe so much?—Never dare to enter these walls again."

"—Nay, nay, my good friends! you little know what you are saying; and I forgive your violence, when I think of the cause. Yet do have some reason; your niece may not be to blame beyond the imprudence of a private marriage, which she may not yet have had an opportunity of explaining.—"

"—'Tis false, sir!—'tis false, sir! She has had no opportunity of a private marriage!—Begone, I say, this instant! She! the girl I *have* been so wrapped up in!—To make a private marriage and not tell *me!*—'Tis a rank falsehood, sir! You know nothing of your profession.—It's false altogether.—Get out of my doors, sir, before I kick you out!—"

"—With all my heart, Sir Job, with all my heart; though, as your friend, I'll not go far. I shall be in the way, Sir Job, when you want me; and that won't be long. Excuse me, Sir Job, excuse me; but I've no meaning in it,—Sir.—Your most obedient." And bowing most obsequiously, and getting as fast as possible out of the way of the incensed patriarch, Dr. Bamboozle made his exit much more rapidly than his entrance; leaving behind him a scene of confusion not frequently beheld.

"—Oh! Sir Job, Sir Job!" sobbed her ladyship, from under her handkerchief, as soon as the Dr. had departed, "is this what you always called your 'Irish prudence of demeanour?'"

"Hold your peace, woman, or you'll drive me mad!"

"I can't hold my peace, Sir Job; and I won't hold my peace! If the Doctor's tale prove true—To think of my house being thus scandalized by *your* niece, and after all we've done for her! Oh, what a shocking blackguard she must be!"

"—Begone to your room, madam, I say, or hold your peace. The woman who can be guilty of stabbing with her tongue the character of another, on the bare surmise of a babbling quack, is as much worse than an assassin as dishonour is worse than death.—*True!*—It cannot be true.—*True!*—No.—I could have borne even bankruptcy itself more calmly!"

## CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

AN ASSIZE TOWN—THE DAY BEFORE THE TRIAL—WHAT HAPPENED SINCE WE LAST PARTED FROM OUR OLD FRIENDS—A SLIGHT GLANCE AT TWO NEW ONES.

At the termination of our last chapter, fate seemed to threaten the Periwinkle family with some of the most dreaded visitations in her power. How far and to what extent these befel, those who have any curiosity on the subject to gratify, will most readily learn by resigning themselves to the current of our story, which now leads us to the ancient assize town of ———.

The first warm day of spring was fast verging upon noon; the cathedral bells were rolling forth a joyous peal; the gay citizens, with all bravery of apparel on their backs, and gaiety in their countenances, were thronging forth towards one of the principal entrances of the city, as the cry was bandied from mouth to mouth—"The judges are coming!"

Every balcony 'along the line' seemed to wear a more bright appearance. The windows were open; gay colours flitted to and fro on fair shoulders within; and every now and then a plumed head and expectant face popped forth to reconnoitre in the direction in which the ermined dignity of the law was expected to appear. Even the chief hair-dresser of the place, in the general excitement, rashly exposed his bald cranium uncovered to the rays of the sun, and fumbled for a while with one hand in the capacious pouch of his white apron, among every description of comb and scissors, while with the other he protected his vision from the effects of a most searching gaze at —nothing.

Bustle, the rich saddler, in all the dignity of a cocked hat, sword, emblazoned truncheon, and gold-laced coat, had put himself at the head of an army of urchins, and, after perpetually turning the flank of the houses in Castle-street, during the space of one hour, now proceeded to the awful undertaking of mounting his own nag, and taking his part, as city marshal, in the civic pomp of the procession.

Then was the time when every aspiring youth, who had interest with the authorities, might obtain a white peeled withe-wand for—nothing. Then did the conscientious possessors of "elegant apartments," feel the coming of that hour when three guineas were moderately to be taken for the use of two small closets from "gentlemen of the bar," whose "travelling the circuit" has been significantly done into English by the phrase of "riding in po'-chays, and changing fi'-pun notes." Then did the unlamented bodies of dead poultry rise two shillings a head, while others that crowed at morn, alive and hearty, fell—never to rise more.

It was the assize week. All seemed to hail it with gladness and

with joy; for love, for glory, or for gain. Before the fancies of some flitted the assize ball; of others, the delight of going back to their homes, the victors in their suit. A more considerable number, reflected on the truth, that for every guinea the long robes of the circuit swept away, they left one and a half behind them. The painful part of this reflection was resigned to the Great Unbriefed, and they had not yet arrived; while the great majority were glad, because it was the fashion with the few. At last, the sources of all these vivid emotions began slowly to roll into the city. The judges in the high-sheriff's carriage; the leading counsel in their own; the juniors in the aforesaid "po'-chays," two and two. The marshal-men, the white wands, and all the indescribable rout that follow alike a triumph or an execution—a marriage or a funeral.

"Besotted fools! I wonder if they have the least idea of what they're shouting for?" muttered a sturdy cynic, as he elbowed his way through the crowd towards the principal hotel.

"Who are you, I should like to know?" angrily demanded some of the parties whom the stranger thus unceremoniously thrust aside.

"Your lord and master, dog! so don't forget to give a true account of me when you write home; and if you'll ask it on your knees, I'll give you a penny to pay the scrivener."

"Holloa! where be you a pushing to?" demanded others.

"There and back," was the equally courteous reply; "follow your nose and you'll find out the road."

"I say, Mr. Sauce-box, if you're inclined for a fight,"—began to remonstrate the rebuffed, but, clearly, Sauce-box was *not* inclined for a fight, for, without ever looking round, he continued his route, and soon gained a part of the road, where, being less pressed for room, he seemed to regain some portion of his endangered equanimity. Just as he had arrived at a corner, and was about to cross the street towards the hotel in question, forth popped an elderly man, of middle height, dark as a berry, with eyes that seemed to pierce whatever they encountered, and form so thin and slight, that even feathers flew away at his approach, for fear they should be cut through.

"Ah, Mr. Kickup," cried the keen phantom, seizing in his attenuated fingers the large paw of the more burly stranger, "I am so glad to see you.—But how's this?" feigning to start back in sorrow. "You appear out of humour, Mr. Kickup!"

"Out of humour, Mr. Kickup? How can a gentleman help being out of humour when he's used so rascally ill by the weather? Here comes a piping-hot day—I've seen a cooler, broil a beef-steak in the sunshine, on the bare gridiron—catches us in the midst of frost and snow, with all one's friged ideas about them, and never so much as gives us twenty-four hours' notice of trial; while here have I been, Costs, I protest, on the honour of a gentleman, walking through these beasts at Ephesus ever since I took my luncheon, a whole half hour, without moistening my lips with a drop of anything."

"Oh, if that's the case, I don't wonder at the ruffling of your temper; for I know such excesses are not a part of your system. But

what says the law, Mr. Kickup?—what says the law?—'It is never too late to do justice.' Step over with me to *mine*. I always put up at the Bunch of Grapes, close at hand, you know. I've now ordered a shoulder of lamb and mint sauce at three o'clock, and we can just amuse ourselves with a pint of brandy or so till the cloth's laid. It doesn't want above two hours or so, and there was two or three little things I wanted to knock up a little chat with you upon—one or two little matters."

"Yes, yes; I know you do, but I can't stay now; I've other fish to fry."

"You know'd I do, Mr. Kickup! Why, I'm surprised at you!" looking as if he would dissect every thought in the astute brain of his bulky companion. "How can you know anything about it—why, I hardly know'd it myself."

"Psha, Psha! Mr. Costs; what of that? How can a sharp hand like you talk in that childish way? That sort of thing may be all very well for the general run of practising attornies; but when a man's been clerk to a lord chancellor, you understand, he knows a man's thoughts before he utters them."

"Well, well; I must say, Mr. Kickup, for a barrister's clerk you're always for cutting it rather fat; and I suppose you'll never be content till we poor devils fall down and worship you like Nebuchadnezzar's golden *calf*—Ha, ha!"

"Come, come, Mr. Costs, if you're going to have a laugh, I think it would be just as honest if you paid for it; and before you talk of gold again, be pleased to hand up those two guineas, clerk's fees on your briefs last Monday, or else, when I come to settle with myself to-morrow morning"—

"Tut, man, don't be so dirty particular; I've got two prosecutions and a defence, which I shall be bringing you to-night, and we'll settle it altogether; and now, joking apart, can you take a snack with me this afternoon?"

"Not possible, sir, I'm afraid; but I'll look in on you about seven o'clock, perhaps."

"So do—now don't forget—a little before if possible—'cause I've got a client coming at nine."

"Aye, aye, Mr. Costs, I'll remember it." Then, as soon as Costs had turned the corner—"If it suits my convenience, that is. Jonathan, my boy, look sharp; that worthy practitioner wants something out of you. Costs—in—the—cause never calls you *Mr.* Kickup for nothing, or all I can say is, he's very much changed in the last three days!"

## CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

### POURTRAYS THE PECULIAR MODESTY OF JONATHAN KICKUP.

As Jonathan muttered the last phrase, in that peculiar grumbling *sotto voce* in which all great and thinking men are known to hold their conversations with themselves, he walked into the yard of Sefton's hotel, and in the authoritative tone and manner that pre-eminently distinguished him, began bawling for the waiter. The waiter not replying, he changed his note to boots. Boots being equally deaf, as a last resort he applied to Ostler. Still no one came.

"Eternally confound these people!" cried he, looking round at the massive stone pillars that upheld that part of the building, and among the deserted spaces of which his voice played with the echo as merry a game of hide-and seek as most impatient men might desire. "A man might as well expend his lungs amid the marble wastes of Tadmore, as stand calling here on knaves in buckram, who leave their duty to look at every fool's amusement. I suppose nothing will attract attention but making for the silver spoons!"

While, however, Jonathan is reconnoitring for this bold but certainly original manœuvre, we may take leave to examine his outer man, with some of that curiosity for which the recent nature of our acquaintance may perhaps stand as an excuse.

In height, Jonathan Kickup stood some five feet ten inches; his limbs were all of strong and fine proportions, and presented to the eye little beyond the ordinary appearance of such a figure. It is true, that the apparel in which they were clad was donned in that dainty style which at his time of life—some forty years—and in his station, bespeak a touch of the dandy disease. His black trowsers were carefully strapped down, with as great a degree of tension as the somewhat attenuated texture of their knees would warrant, without fear of rupture. The blue coat also was carefully buttoned round the waist; and despite some portions of the gilding being worn off its brass buttons, would doubtless have been a very smart affair, but for the little discrepancies of a tiny hole in the left elbow, and one or two of the button-holes having given way and been darned over. The hat, however, atoned for all.—In brim—in height—in depth and breadth—the hat indeed was irreproachable! While several truly charming ladies—most discreet women, too, in every other act of life—declared their hearts captured at sight! And the jaunty cock with which it was worn!—Oh! nothing, on our honour, could be said against the hat—except that it turned up slightly, from long wear, behind; and Jonathan, from sheer necessity, was obliged to make "the majority equal," by wearing the wrong part before. Some sons of jealousy did object, that its colour was of that hue termed "brown-black;" and this objection they strengthened by the assertion, that it no longer possessed

a nap. Jonathan replied, that his hat was like himself—wide awake, and that he held it on a tenure somewhat similar to that by which the Lombard kings did their iron crown. He could not say God had given it him; No!—but no man would have been more ready to exclaim, "Beware who touches it."

But these were mere externals. It was in the face divine, the aspect, and the attitude—the front, that Jonathan stood apart from other men. His hair, dark and glossy, curled over a good expanse of forehead; his eyes, large and black, were quick and hawk-like in their intelligence; his nose possessed the prominence of a Turk; the nostrils were large and distended to a degree that, while it took very seriously from his pretensions to beauty, strongly heightened the determined cleverness of his expression; while his mouth was large, and boasted a beautiful set of teeth. Perhaps no man possessed more natural eloquence, or turned it to so little real advantage; since, properly seconded or directed, it must have led its possessor to great distinction. His utterance was ready as a rapid river, and his enunciation clear and distinct. His youth seemed to have passed in vagrancy and indulgence. That he had at some time read with great avidity, and retained what he read with singular memory, was clear; both from the language he could at all times command on any subject, and the original way in which he often treated it. Such is a brief hint of Jonathan's character; though unfortunately to the spirit, the drollery, and the manner that accompanied it, little justice can be done on paper. His attitude was of the same self-possessed style as his speech; he inclined somewhat to *en-bon-point*, and the whole cut of the man was that in which Cato may have been supposed to—"give his little senate laws." For the rest, we must leave it to himself to utter, and the reader to conceive.

"Now, Jonathan, my boy!" continued he, in his self-address, after rummaging the deserted bar for a few seconds, "here we have the plate-drawer at last. Such a chance as this doesn't occur every day. How much have we here?—let's get down those scales.—So, that's it—devilish dusty they keep everything. Now for the weights;" and placing all he could find in one scale, he began flinging the silver spoons and forks into the other, having previously secured the beam on a nail.

The noise thus produced was of course considerable. Little seemed Jonathan to care for the dents and bruises, or the silver farthings which the immemorial wisdom of old women has decreed to be lost whenever silver gets either fall or blow. Here it had both in plenty; scarcely two minutes had elapsed when a distant running was heard over-head—away came the footsteps leaping down the stairs—bounce rushed the enemy into the bar, and then in a scream of mingled fury and surprise, a female voice shouted—

"Thieves!—John!—Thomas!—waiter!—What are you doing, rascal?"

"Merely boning the plate, my dear!" replied the complacent Jonathan, not even turning to see who addressed him; then as he continued to bundle spoon after spoon into the scales—"in my ex-

tensive way of business, you see, it's necessary to weigh the metal first always. It isn't worth my while to transact, under a quarter of a hundred weight. I say, young woman, whoever you are, you couldn't oblige me with a few *troy* weights, could you? These are only *avoirdupois*, and the Jews where I have my silver melted down won't take that for orthodoxy any day in the week."

"Thieves!—thieves!" reiterated the bar-maid, flying hither and thither like a bird in a cage with a rat breaking in.

"Why, you keep a most blackguardly plate chest, I must say," returned the immovable Jonathan; "I don't believe, after all, I've got much more than eighteen pounds and a half here. This won't do, my dear! If you can't make it up to a quarter of a hundred, it won't be worth my taking."

In a few seconds, two of the waiters had rushed to the succour of the bar-maid, and when at length the peculator turned to face them, an utter end was put to the excitement of "a most daring robbery," by the unmistakeable face of Jonathan.

"Well, you lazy rascals! a pretty pitch you're come to!" cried he, "that nothing but the sound of a silver bell can bring you to attend to your duties. Here was I calling and cracking my lungs one whole hour by Shrewsbury clock, to get a living soul of some kind to answer the question—whether Sir Job Periwinkle's within doors? Does your master pay you for poking your heads out of window to look at the judges' procession? Or do you think prisoners are so scarce at these assizes, that you must leave a hundred guineas worth of plate lying about for the first comer? One would think the attornies of the Crown Court had clubbed together to reward such lazy rogues as you for the temptation. If that's the case, you know, you'd better advertize it regularly. There's many a fine fellow will be transported yet, for not half the value of so many farthings. But come, you vagabond, look sharp, and bring me a go of brandy."

To this reproach the waiters replied in a breath; while the bar-maid, notwithstanding the privileges of Jonathan, who, as a never-failing customer, was known in every inn and tavern in the city, bridled up with an air of great indignation.—

"There were the bells in the house," she supposed, "that might have gained him as quick attention as pawing and dirtying all the silver spoons. Some people took great liberties, because they fancied themselves favourites; but even favourites might go too far."

"Too far, my darling!" repeated the gallant Jonathan, whispering something in the ear of the incensed damsel, as she replaced the insulted plate, that forced a smile and a blush on her cheek, in spite of all her anger; then, continuing aloud, "As for the plate, my dear, you must not judge of any thing under a cloud; the brightness of somebody's eyes would put *gold* plate out of countenance to say nothing of *silver*."

"Mr. Jonathan," said one of the waiters, returning, "Sir Job's been gone out half an hour; but here's his walley."

"Did you inquire for Sir Job Periwinkle?" demanded the valet, a spruce cockney, entering in mourning livery.

"Sir, I did," replied Jonathan, lifting his hat, and slightly mimicking the mincing manner of the London servant.

"Pray, sir, may I ask your business with Sir Job? He sees scarcely any one at present, and as I really have not the pleasure of your acquaintance"—

"Yes, yes, I perceive; that is a benefit you have yet to profit by; but I never communicate my business to gossips."

"Sir, I don't understand you—I don't know who you are."

"Don't be alarmed as to understanding, my lad. I never laid any accusation against you on that score; and as to who I am, everybody knows Tom Fool, you see, but Tom Fool doesn't know everybody. The fact is, my herald most unfortunately put his trumpet so far down his throat, in announcing my arrival in this city last night, that a team of six horses have been deeply engaged ever since, in endeavouring to drag it out again. This, you will observe, imposes upon my modesty the necessity of briefly informing you, that you have here your humble servant, Jonathan Kickup. In my hours of relaxation I permit a little familiarity, which my friends take with my style, and titles,—that of Nathan Fling for shortness—better known, perhaps, during the period when I and Lord Bluffspeech held the great seal; but, unfortunately, the great seal was not large enough to hold us both, for his lordship fell out with me, and I fell out of the great seal. But let that pass—I abhor unnecessary distinctions—I adore liberty—I love variety—and the confidant of the great seal is now clerk to Charles Periwinkle, Esquire.—Waiter, a glass of gin and water."

"Oh, sir, I beg your pardon; no one is better known to me by reputation—your humour, Mister Kickup, has, I see, not been misrepresented. I'm sure I'm very sorry you have been kept waiting here so long; but seeing you with a *blue* coat on, I had no notion that you were one of the family. Perhaps the refreshment you've ordered you'd like to take in my private room?" extending at the same time the hand of friendship.

"Umph!" returned the imperturbable Jonathan, placing his arms a-kimbo, and bending his head down for a closer inspection of the proffered palm; "very clean hand that, certainly!—does you much credit—no hard work there, at any rate! How often do you wash that paw?—Musselman-like, eh?—every half hour? As to my dress, I always travel in a blue coat, because it looks half-pay-captainish, and signifies I have no money to spare for road-side impositions. Now listen to me, young man!—are you at all acquainted with the English language?"

"I believe, I am," replied the other, not a little nettled, and marvelling greatly at the immortal Jonathan.

"Then, at your time of life, my lad, you'll find it very useful to cultivate this apothegm—"Too much familiarity breeds contempt;"—after that, as I have a little of what you call 'family' business to settle with you, perhaps you'll follow me. Waiter! show the way to Sir Job's servants' room, and bring me a jug of your best ale."

## CHAPTER THE NINTH,

### CONTAINS AN EXPLANATION OF THE PAST, WHICH TENDS CONSIDERABLY TO INVOLVE THE FUTURE.

For some minutes after Jonathan had issued his peremptory instructions to the waiter, Sir Job's valet remained undecided whether he should yield obedience or not, as nothing could be further from pleasure than the feelings produced by Jonathan's assumption of superiority. When John quitted the dominion of the butler as Sir Job's attendant into the country, he fondly imagined all domestic discipline of this sort was at an end. Remembering, however, the influence he had always heard ascribed, in the servants' hall, to the aforesaid Jonathan with Sir Job and his son, as well as the rest of "the family," consideration pointed out the prudence of submission, and internally resolving to hate Mr. Kickup most cordially, by way of set off, he followed Charles' clerk into a small sitting room.

At first, all John's replies were of a very surly character. The fact of Jonathan so far sharing his jug of ale with him, as to drink three glasses only to his one, and this followed by his laying aside his dignity, to the extent of taking his dinner with the valet, added to Jonathan's drollery and fun, of which John soon began to feel the influence, all contributed quickly to smoothe down the offended vanity of the valet. He forgot his fine gentleman's-gentlemanism, and gradually expanded into a rational lacquey. Having been hired a brief time previous to Sir Job Periwinkle's leaving town for Berrylea, he was there during the tragic period recorded in our first chapters; and Jonathan having been sent on some money business into Ireland, where the knight had previously been British enough, to purchase some property, he had only returned in time for his master's circuit, and was still in considerable ignorance of the correct particulars relating to those unhappy events. The general outline of the facts he, of course, knew, and now, with that curiosity which distinguishes all men of science, he availed himself of an opportunity, which fortune had thrown in his way, to learn all that occurred.

It required little pressing to engage the valet in the narration, and by the time their meal was finished, John had just reached that point at which the knight and Lady Periwinkle, having in wrath ejected Dr. Bamboozle, for daring to prophecy the heresy of a private marriage on the part of Nora Creina, were, in the course of another hour, obliged once more to admit the correctness of his prognostication, and implore his assistance in preserving the lives of the mother and her child. Notwithstanding the many untoward circumstances that attended its premature birth, the latter seemed likely to live and do well; but of the former little or no hope was held out: puerperal fever and delirium having instantly followed labour, and defied every

attempt to moderate them. The maddened grief of Sir Job; the rage of her ladyship; the sorrow and anguish of all, were fully dwelt upon and described. Every desk of the unfortunate Nora was broken open; every trunk, drawer, or receptacle of any kind whatever ransacked, to ascertain if some correspondence might not discover whether such a marriage had ever taken place. Not a line was found. In the breasts of Sir Job, of Charles, and Julia, affection, too powerful to be subdued by either shame or resentment, insisted on this the innocent view of their relative's conduct, despite of every accumulated proof; but all they could find to oppose to the torrent of the stepmother's fury, was a wedding-ring, from which the gloss of the manufacturer was not yet worn, enclosed in a silk covering, and suspended round the beauteous neck of the young and senseless mother. This, in the eyes of prejudice and outraged dignity was held to be worse than nothing; and ill as Nora was, Lady Periwinkle insisted that one roof should not contain the erring niece with her spotless self and daughter.

The relentless nature of this piece of propriety caused a total revulsion in the bosom of Sir Job. Indignantly refusing to desert his niece, he heard in silence the orders given by his wife to put the horses to the carriage; and at three o'clock in the morning she set off for the county town. Everything that was necessary to be done for the preservation of Nora and her child was now confided to the housekeeper and Bamboozle, while servants were sent to procure the instant assistance of two other medical attendants residing at some distance.

A fortnight passed. All that wealth or art could do, had been effected. The child throve apace, Nora was still living, and hope could say no more. The violence of the fever had passed into a low delirium, in which memory, sense, almost speech itself seemed to be swallowed up. A few disjointed words—moans that chilled the hearts of the hearers, and childish tears, that appeared unable to bring relief, alone remained of life; and if her condition was not insanity, it was but a mere term that raised the distinction.

To avert this horrible calamity, the physicians one and all agreed, that change of scene, the most distant from that of her sorrows, was the only resource.

The great revolutionary war with France, which then had not long broken out, entirely closed the ports of the continent; and Ireland, as the place of her birth, and therefore the most likely to excite a fresh train of emotions, was one of which choice was made. As soon as her strength permitted, the journey was begun under Sir Job's care. Her infant was allowed to be taken also; with strict injunctions, however, that as she had hitherto seemed unable to recognise it, so, that it should never be presented to her, unless at her own entreaty. Sir Job having seen her safely placed among those on whom he could depend, left some of his own servants to wait on her, and returned to give that heart-rending evidence which justice demanded from him on the acts of his own son. Up to this time the accounts of Nora's health continued much the same. In the mind alone seemed to be

concentrated the darkness of disease; and it was only from the continued lapse of time that any expectation was held out of her ultimate recovery.

Meanwhile, though no direct communication had taken place between Paul and his family, owing to the fact of their being so unfortunately mixed up with the evidence against him; yet no assistance, no aid, no comfort, which they could procure, had been spared. Of his acquittal, however, even the most sanguine could entertain but little hope. For a long time he remained perfectly silent on all that had taken place, praying only to be granted an interview with Nora. His own guilt or innocence—his hopes of life, or fear of punishment, all seemed to fade away before the intensity of this desire; and though told that this was impossible, yet no cause was assigned, because it was conceived right that his conduct should not be actuated by a knowledge of anything that had occurred subsequent to the charge on which he had been apprehended. This treatment, however, led him to take up the idea of her death, a notion that appeared to produce such deep misery as to warrant a disclosure of the truth.

Here, however, his conduct only increased the mystery that seemed to envelope this dark murder. The knowledge of her having given birth to an infant, and lying at the point of death, seemed to agitate him greatly, it is true; yet just in such a manner as, under all the circumstances, might have been expected. On the day after learning this intelligence, he desired that two of the county magistrates might visit him, as he wished to give a formal explanation of part of his conduct. His wish was complied with; and having been cautioned, that anything he said would be used as evidence against him, he made a statement explanatory of some of the suspicious circumstances under which he had been found on the morning of the murder, and to this effect:—

On the preceding evening some difference had arisen between himself and the deceased, relative to the intimacy subsisting between him and his cousin Nora, in which difference she also took part against him; that having his suspicions aroused, he determined that night to lie awake and watch the conduct of his cousin John, who usually slept in an adjoining room, but was that night to share his bed. That having pretended to be asleep, his cousin rose, as near as he could recollect, about one o'clock, and left the room, closing the door. That he immediately rose after him, gently opened the door, and listened for his footsteps. That they, contrary to his suspicions, were heard by him descending the stairs. That he then left his door ajar, and returned to his bed. That he laid awake and watching for more than two hours; and at length, unable to resist the effects of fatigue, unconsciously fell asleep. That he awoke in the morning, just before daylight; and remembering what had passed the night before, felt for and missed his cousin. That in an agony of self-reproach and jealousy, he arose again and listened; but could hear nothing except the baying of his cousin's dog under the window. That in hopes to calm himself, he had bathed his face and hands, and then thrown the

water from the window at the dog, to drive it away; and that finally, unable to conquer the feelings that assailed him, and the thought that in his sleep all his previous watchfulness had been rendered futile, he had given himself up to that phrenzy of passion which had prevented him from sleeping again, and left him in that state of agitation in which he had been found by his father. Of the blood, however, discovered in his room, and all the other suspicious circumstances, he declared his solemn inability to offer the least explanation; and disclaimed in the most sacred manner alike all knowledge of them, or participation in the death of his cousin: declaring finally, that his only motive for hitherto withholding this statement, was his unwillingness to say anything in his own defence which could either in the eyes of his own family or that of the world militate against his relation, Nora, for whom he entertained the deepest affection and devotion; and who, he felt assured, had acted under the sanction of a marriage, however private and concealed it might have been. That the results of this last step having disclosed to the world her secret, he conceived it a duty he owed to his family and his own innocence to withhold this explanation no longer.

As we will not trench on matters that will more properly be noticed at the trial, it is unnecessary to add the commentaries of Jonathan and his companion on this act of Paul's, and the various other matters they had been discussing. The entrance of Sir Job and his son called away the gentleman's gentleman to attend to his master, and rendered unnecessary the delivery of the message with which Charles had charged his clerk to his father. Jonathan, thus set at liberty, took up his hat, and meditating with a sombre aspect on the probable issue of the trial, determined to refresh his nerves by a quiet piece of rurality, as he termed a stroll among the green lanes, an enjoyment by which none were more delighted, or less frequently indulged.

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## CHAPTER THE TENTH.

### HOW JONATHAN'S PROTEGEE, CHAWBACON, CONTRIBUTED TO THE ENTERTAINMENT OF HIS PATRON AND FRIEND.

As Jonathan was passing out of the city, he saw before him two figures, which he soon recognised as those of Dick Doubtful and Dr. Bamboozle.

"Nay, doctor, wait a minute; let us see how this is!" Jonathan heard Dick saying to the doctor, as the ex-assistant chancellor came up with the learned pair; "you say that consumption and decline are diseases of so similar a type, that there is scarcely any difference between them. With all the deference of a tyro, speaking in the presence of a professor, I should be strongly inclined to doubt that posi-

tion—exceedingly so indeed. It seems to me extremely doubtful that—extremely so;—that is, at the first glance of it."

"Come, come, Mr. Counsellor, let every cobbler stick to his own last. I'm not going to lay down the law of evidence to you; neither must you teach me physic. I've practised forty years, and the only difference I've ever found between the two complaints is this—people in a decline always die with the aid of physic; but those in a consumption—die—with or without physic."

"Oh! if you come to that, we all do much the same, though we have neither complaint. Have it as you like, however; have it as you like."

"Good morning, gentlemen; a fine broiling afternoon this," chimed in Jonathan.

"To be sure it is, Master Jonathan; where did you spring from? To be sure it is; how can it help being a broiling day; don't you see my umbrella is covered with new silk?" demanded the doctor, pointing to his parapluie, which maintained its usual position behind this light of science.

"Jonathan, where may you be wandering?" inquired Dick.

"Just to take a walk, sir; nothing more. But perhaps you gentlemen are discussing some privileged matters, on which my presence may be intrusive."

"Not at all, Jonathan," chimed in both at once.

"Let us hear how the world is using you," said the doctor.

"Have you seen the calender yet," inquired the counsel; "and how many causes are set down for trial, do you know?"

"Not exactly, Mr. Doubtful. I believe the harvest is pretty plentiful, though I dare not say the labourers are few. As to the calender, I did buy a copy of that—here it is, sir. I am happy to see that crime is rapidly on the increase:—four murders, eight arsons, twenty-one burglaries, seven rapes, felonies in profusion, and a grand jury room full of misdemeanors. Costs-in-the-cause has got a face as joyful as the first of May, and swears he shall be able to pay one clerk's fee in three, for every brief he gets out of the gaol. Devil take him! no one doubts his being able to pay; but the worst of it is, he's so willing to bilk!"

"Costs-in-the-cause, Master Jonathan! By the great Apollyon! who possesses such a name as that?"

"Why, doctor, 'tis a name, I may say, of my christening. You see there are two of them, Messrs. Costs, attornies, cousins—and the devil a soul else can cozen them besides. The elder one, who's as tall, lean, and sharp as a kite, does as little work as he can, over and above grabbing nearly all the profits; while the younger, who's as fat as a cormorant, does all the work, and gets little pay. Now the elder, you see, doctor, who boils the pudding in his pan, and eats all the fruit, I call Costs-in-the-cause; but the younger, who has to roll the dumpling, and then get nothing but the dough, I call Taxed-costs, to distinguish them."

"Upon my word, Jonathan, a very nice legal distinction."

"Oh! upon my word, very good;" and having duly considered whether, "upon the merits," he was entitled to say so much, Doubtful began to signify his approbation by a hearty laugh.

"Now, gentlemen," said Jonathan, pausing at a stile, "if either of you are inclined to see a farm right well worked, there's a young rural protegee of mine lives down yonder where you see the smoke, who can show us one to a nicety—young Chawbacon—his fathers have been farmers—for *forty* generations I was going to say—but I know they have for *four*. He has a nice bit of property himself, and a tidy young wife—"

"But won't it cut up our walk, Jonathan?"

"Not a bit of it, doctor; you can't take a pleasanter walk than this. And between ourselves, gentlemen, Chawbacon has some of the most crafty tipple, as Mr. Straitonend would call it, in the shape of old ale, that ever went over the lips of mortal man. Doctor Bamboozle, it would break my heart, to say nothing of my gullet, to pass this stile without one jug of it."

"By the shade of the deathless Hippocrates, Jonathan! breaking men's hearts is not my killing them. We'll say nothing of the gullet, as you suggest. Thou shalt have thine ale in thine inn; so, Mr. Doubtful, let us cross the stile," and in a moment the three were walking towards the farm house.

In a few minutes our party reached the house. Nothing could be more hospitable than Chawbacon's reception. Forth came the crafty tipple, and right good ale all hands pronounced it. By some mistake, Jonathan contrived in wondrous little time to appropriate about two whole jugsful to his own peculiar comfort; and this accident it was, perhaps, which induced him, as he rose, to lay his hand on the hypogastric region, saying, "Chawbacon, my lad, that ale has almost got too good since I was here last. You hav'nt a stray glass of brandy at hand, have you, just to keep it steady in its place?"

"O! mun!" said Chawbacon, with a knowing smile, "thee's a'most the poorest haand to drink that ever I've a met."

"Why, I believe that's true," replied the modest Jonathan, all unconscious of the quiz, till the loud laugh of the hearers awoke him to some distant glimmer of the fact. However, down went the brandy, and forth the party sallied into the fold yard.

Then was the soul of Chawbacon greatly comforted by all the praises sounded on his various herds. The farmer's sires had always been famous for their prize cattle of different kinds; and whether their homely shades rested content with the walking evidence exhibited in the bulky person of their son, or the various prints of their prizes which hung round the best parlour, few that looked on either would be inclined to question the justice of their particular renown.

When, however, the laudatory vocabulary of the party was becoming greatly exhausted, and Chawbacon had somewhat got over the fit of immense astonishment and ill-suppressed mirth that seized him at sight of Dr. Bamboozle, he suddenly gave tongue, in tone of most un-

mitigated delight, to the wondrous breed, temper, properties, and propensities of "a young bitch puup," of the mastiff breed—"Nane of yere yalf and yalf koinds, Measther Jonathan, but a rale out and outer. Her feyther, mun, was got out o' a Spanish dog, with a naame nigh three toimes as lang as his tail, and crossed, too—so I'm told—with soom'at of the French, where the breed be left ever since we waaped the Parleyvous, langsyne back."

"Aye, aye, Chawbacon, I suppose you're thinking of the Calais breed."

"That's the naame, man, that's the naame. Most toimes I ca's the town Killus, amang neighbours; for none o' them know betther, and 'tisn't so baad a naame for a good buull-dog."

"True, Chaw, true; they have the right good breed there, I know; and how did you get such a choice bit of stuff?"

"Why, ye see, Measther Jonathan, thot's a little bit o' secret. My lord's under-gamekeeper's head-man was a matther of a foive pun' note i' my debt, and I'd been looking out for't mother puuping for some toime past, and, soome how or other, one bright morning I foond the puup in my stable; but how she came there no body can guess, Measther Jonathan, not at all. Her mother was aye fed by my friend, and so, maybe, out of gratitude and the loike of that, the ould bitch moight have sent one of her puups down to me. Here, Black Bess! Black Bess!" cried Chawbacon, after opening a kennel door and whistling, and presently out came the valued "puup," looking such a perfect devil of ferocity, as made all but her master draw sagaciously on one side. Jonathan alone affected an indifference to any retreating emotions, while the vile whelp, with its ears not yet healed from their cropping—its savage black eyes glancing fire—its under-hung snarling teeth, glistening white as it growled at the strangers—and its tail most suspiciously hung between its legs—drew behind its master, and only seemed not to bite off his finger-ends, as a mark of that "gratitude and thot loike," which was so admirably supposed to have distinguished her mother.

"There, gen'lemen," cried Chawbacon, seizing the head of Black Bess, and showing her precocious fangs, while she growled all the while like distant thunder; "there's hold for ye—there's breed—Whoy, a week agone I thought sure I must a made two hoondred goolden guineas by her—all bets—right down gude 'uns too. There was to have been a most famous buull-bait noigh handy here, in one of my meadows; but them there joostices must think to shoove their paw in the dish, with a talk of their humanity.—D—— the joostices! I say. Provided they shoots all the coocks and paartridges in the country, they don't care a cooss what coomes o' the rest. They never think any thing o' their humanity to us poor varmers!—As if God A'mighty didn't give us the buulls to be baited as soon as anything else. Whoy, now look at that puup, will any one tell me she wasn't made a poopose to pin a buull's nose to the ground, and nothing else? Whoy, the little aangel's so much blude in her, I warrant—that though she's never had a chance for a single try yet—if ye was

to go behind a hedge and make a bit of a bellowing loike, she'd spring slaap in among the thoorns to look for 'e."

"Come, come, now, Chawbacon," interposed Jonathan, "we don't at all doubt, you know, that you can spin as tough a yarn as most folks, and we've heard all you have to say in praise of your pup and all that; but before you want us to believe such a story as the last, you must remember we're not like your friend, the under-gamekeeper's man, 'a matther of a foive pun' note in your debt.'"

"What! thee won't believe it, won't thee, mun? Then thee knows nothing of a buull-dog puup, I can tell thee!—Thee may'st know plenty of law, and be a main good hand a' dreening a pitcher of yill, but thee knows little of a buull-dog puup—that's all I say."

"And I say this, Master Chawbacon," retorted the immortal Jonathan, warming up equally with the farmer, "that I know just as much of 'a buull-dog puup,' aye, or any other country-bred puppy, as you do, Master Chawbacon."

"Weel, weel, Brag's a main gude dog, at any rate, Measther Jonathan, but Holdfaast, you know, was always a soight betther; now I'll bet you foive goold guineas you don't, and if that bean't faair, what is? and these gen'lemen shall see the wager."

"Don't talk like a fool, man; how can we decide such a wager as that?"

"Decide it?—in a minute, mun—in a minute.—Just step out wi' me into yon meaddy of moine, and get thee a one soide of a hedge, and me and the puup will get t' other, and if thee canst maak any noise in the world at all loike a buull, and the puup don't spring baang into the hedge after it, the goold's your'n; and this here gen'leman, from foreign parts, wi' the ombrelly on his baack, shall hoold the staakes."

"Well, Dr. Bamboozle, what do you say to it?" asked Jonathan, turning to the little gentleman from foreign parts. "Do you think any dog would do such a thing?"

"By the genius of Galen! most learned Nathan Fling, I should say not. First, nothing but a dog of most rare breed would care to fly at such a noise; and, secondly, per contra, a dog of rare breed would not be so taken in: I hold it an indisputable fact in nature, that animals of instinct are led far less by sound than scent, so that, although thou couldst roar like Juno's ox, yet unless thou couldst smell like a bull, as well as bellow like one, I do not see how the worthy Chawbacon can be right; yet how thou art to do that, I don't see, unless, indeed, I were to *vaccinate* you upon the spot; and that, you know, is an operation that will take time. However, (*aside*) since Clodpole is so ready with his cash, brother Jonathan, just let the dog in for it. The hound! to debate a matter with men of science!"

"Why, so I think too, sir," replied Jonathan aloud; "Mr. Doubtful, what do you think of the question?"

"Oh! upon my word, I don't know what to say to it! It's a very nice matter—a very nice matter indeed; a great deal may be said on both sides. On the very threshold, you see," patting the finger

against the thumb, "are several questions, and in each of which at least five points to be considered."

"No, no, there bean't tho'," interrupted Chawbacon, whose blood was thoroughly warmed. "Begging your pardon, Measther, there bean't foive points in the whole matter, unless it be the foive guineas, and here be they," pulling from his fob a little dirty leathern bag, quite full, in one hand, and counting out the coin with the other. "Baiting these here, sir, with all respect to you, as I say, there's only one point more in the whole waager—yea or nay—and that's the whole of it. If Measther Jonathan be foolish enough to think he's right, let un doun wi' the doost; but if he zees he's wrong, and afeard to bet, let un say as much at once."

"That's enough, Master Chawbacon. Here, doctor, just oblige us by holding the money, will you, for a few minutes, till I can take the conceit out of this country body. These clodpoles think there's as little end to their knowledge of flesh, as there is to the flesh that clogs their knowledge.—There are my five."

"And here be moine, zir, and thank yee. Now, gentlemen, this be the way to the meaddy. Black Bess! hey, there, Black Bess! coom along—coom along! That's a darling puup!" and away trudged the trio; the farmer leading with his cudgel, as sternly resolved as ever was a batoned marshal, with a staff of chivalry to support him.

A few minutes brought them to the field of battle. It was a large grazing meadow, separated from another of nearly equal extent by a long straggling hedge, through which the cattle had broken gaps innumerable.

"Now, then, gentlemen," said Chawbacon; "do you go on the roight haand, I'll take the left. There's a nice little brak in the yedge lower down—he be neither too large loike, nor too smaal. Mind, Measther Jonathan, the bet. Thee must roar, mun, as much loike a buull as thee can'st, or it bean't a fair waager."

"Aye, aye, Chawbacon; never you fear. There shall be only one better bull in the business—the bull of your venturing such a bet at all. Now, Mr. Doubtful and Dr. Bamboozle, here's the spot for a halt—are you ready on the other side there, Chawbacon?"

"E'es—rout away, man—rout loike a good un' now!"

"Boo-oo-oh!—boo-oo-oh!—boo-oo-oh!"—roared Jonathan, toning down his voice to a pitch of deep bass, that most admirably mimicked the monarch of the pastures:

"Hiss!—hiss!—hiss!—now then Bess!—hiss!—at un'—in to un'," replied the more distant dialect of Chawbacon.

"Boo-oo-oh!—boo-oo-oh!" returned the fictitious bull.

Scarcely had the last roar ceased to vibrate in Jonathan's chest, when *crash!* went the brambles of the hedge. Something white was hastily seen to whisk through the air, and before either Kickup or any of the party could move to avert the danger, the promising young "Black Bess" was seen to have seized the immortal Jonathan by the nose and upper lip; and there she hung, to all appearance utterly

reckless of everything but sustaining his part in the entertainment, and the character given of him by his master; while the unfortunate clerk, stamping about with the agony, was obliged either to suspend the ferocious animal in this unexpected manner by his own proboscis, or be pinned to the ground like the bull he had too truly imitated.

"Take him off!—you fools! take him off!" cried Jonathan, making the most desperate but futile efforts to liberate himself, and seeing that Dr. Bamboozle was enjoying a most convulsive fit of laughter at his expense, while Dick Doubtful was standing in a trance of the most mathematic wonder and surprise, muttering, just loud enough to be heard—

"Let us see how this is!—let us see how this is!"

Chawbacon, meanwhile, was scrambling across the ditch, and just looked over the hedge in time to hear the fiftieth appeal of poor Jonathan, as the sanguine current began to flow from his wounded front.

"Take him off, you fools!—take him off!—Chawbacon, you rascal! call him off!" repeated Jonathan.

The farmer, however, no sooner beheld the real state of the case, than his whole aspect beamed forth with a look of admiration and delight perfectly cheering.

"Foine! Foine! little Black Bess!" cried he, in a perfect ecstacy. "Thee's worth a hunner'd pun', noate, if thee's worth a farding!" Then addressing, with extended palm, the unhappy sufferer—"Now, doan't 'e, Measther Jonathan—now, doan't 'e pull un off just yet!—He'll never do thee no haarm, mun!—Do 'e let un suuck a little bluid—Do 'e let un suuck a little bluid, now!—Never mind the paain, mun!—It'll be the maaking o' the puup."

On hearing this deprecatory speech in favour of Black Bess, uttered as it was, too, by her master, with all the serious and beseeching gravity of one who entreated for his life, Bamboozle burst out into redoubled roars of mirth. A smile even began slowly to gather on the cheeks of Doubtful, and it was clear he was fast approaching the formation of something like a decision, whether Black Bess was, or was not, to hang on Jonathan's lip for the unexpired freehold term, including the whole remainder of their natural lives. Jonathan, however, who had studied *La Place* much less, and the *passions* much more, than Dick, now seized the pup by the neck, and closely pressing together the windpipe till suffocation compelled her to unclose her teeth, lifted up "the game little darling's" body in his powerful arms, and rapidly swinging it round his head, dashed the insensible carcase full in the face of its admiring master.

Chawbacon, who, it seems, in his undisguisable delight, had been trusting to a most insecure footing, no sooner received this energetic projectile on the broad full moon of his countenance, than over he went at once—a splash was heard in the ditch on the other side, and then a noise so fearful, that it might fairly have been supposed that the bull was taking his turn there, had not the bleeding and incensed Jonathan made a furious run at Bamboozle, loudly proclaiming his in-

tent, with many oaths, to toss that light of science into the neighbouring horse-pond.

Bamboozle, however, was too light of foot and too quick of eye; for away he went, over hedge and stile, fence and ditch, and Jonathan, out of breath, gave up the chace, and turned in furious mood towards the city, stenching, as he went, his deadly wounds; when the parts quickly swelling up from their loose texture, made him look less like a bull than some furious old sow returning fresh ringed from the blacksmith's.

By this time Dick began to entertain a glimmering of doubt whether he should not have interfered in favour of his friend's clerk, without waiting to see "How this is."

With a view, it has been supposed, of saying something expiatory, consolatory, and so on, Dick now approached Jonathan, and asked him, "*If* he was *in pain*?"

Jonathan, in whose soul the flood-gates of all fury and unmitigable ferocity were now open, turned round and eyed the philosophic inquirer with a glance that might well have become the bull he had so unfortunately mimicked; then, without vouchsafeing a single syllable in reply, away he strode, as fiercely as before.

Seeing that this attempt at kindness and compassion had so signally failed, Dick Doubtful, with a view, it is inferred, of saying something more sympathizing, quickened his steps, so as to get up quite by the side of the agonized clerk; and then, in the same tone of deep feeling in which he would have soothed a man who had splashed his boots, or ruffled his hat, or dropped his pocket-handkerchief, he rapidly repeated the words—"Never mind—never mind—never mind."

In an instant the rapid strides of Jonathan came to a dead halt. With a voice of thunder and insulted dignity that, notwithstanding his swollen lip, might have been heard throughout the whole meadow, Kickup replied, "I tell you what it is, Mr. Doubtful! I *do* mind—and if *you* have *any* mind—which I very greatly dispute, I advise you to mind this—Jonathan Kickup owes you a heavy debt, but he respects your profession, sir. This alone restrains him from repaying it on the spot. In these matters he is a punctual man; and if he does not cancel the obligation by a check at sight," clenching his fists in almost uncontrollable anger, "why he will by note of hand, at a very short date. So remember this, sir, and look out accordingly."

For some moments Dick came to a dead halt of surprise. How could any one have misunderstood—still more, how could any one have rejected his little sentences of good-will, conciliation, and sympathy?

"Stay, stay—let us see how this is, Kickup!" began Dick, involuntarily falling into his usual attitude of debate and cogitation. But Jonathan was already in the next field. The man with the cork leg was an *adagio*, or mere slow movement, compared to him. Away he went into the vanishing point of the perspective in less time than

it took Dick to ask himself what it all meant; and when he turned, with his head hanging smiling on his breast, and his hands immersed, deep as a deep-sea lead-line in his pockets, to question his late companions, Bamboozle and Chawbacon, he beheld the former "afar off," on a little hill, watching the retreat of the foe; and the farmer on his knees, beside the "puup," which he had brought through the hedge, watching how much life was yet left in "Black Bess," the darling, that he so benevolently valued at "a hunner'd pun' noate."

"There seems to be some kind of misunderstanding here," muttered Dick Doubtful, as he pulled out his watch, "well, well—no matter; as I'm junior at to-day's mess, it's time for me to return and dress for dinner."

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## CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

### WHICH DESCRIBES THE GRAND COURT OF THE * * CIRCUIT.

Some of the most illustrious names that have graced the first profession of Europe—the English Bar, gathered the earliest fruits of their celebrity on the ——— circuit. As a natural consequence, some of the brightest ornaments of the purest bench of justice in the world—the English judges, the ——— circuit has contributed. Of the most unyielding champions of freedom, of the most astute lawyers, of the most brilliant orators, of the keenest wits, that circuit has contributed its full share. Yet let not the aspiring chancellors of the Home, the Oxford, or the Western, accuse our humble muse of slighting their strong claims to our remembrance. We forget not one of the proud names that grace their rolls, from the Erskine and the Best of a former day, to the Talfourd and Wilde of the present. But it is with the ——— circuit that we have at present to do; and it is both the common law and equity of all authors to usher in their heroes with a flourish of trumpets. Among a host of other precedents, the memorable case, Othello *v.* Desdemona, Shakspeare, fol. 287:—"It is the noble moor; I know him by his trumpet."

Among other points that distinguished the ——— circuit, almost as much as the crowd of able men who have composed its members, was an immemorial custom of its bar mess, known by the designation of "The grand court of the ——— circuit." As this was most peculiar and amusing in itself, and as in our limited reading we are unable to point out any printed records of its proceedings; and as, moreover, they formed a part of the events the veritable history of which we are writing, we are sure that our readers will rather thank than blame the course of truth which, in the flow of its too frequently troubled stream, takes in at the present writing this pleasant little islet, among the deeper waters of its current.

Upon this circuit, from time immemorial, or in more legal phrase,

"to which the memory of man runneth not to the contrary," has been established an institution which seems to stand in England as the only parallel of one formerly found among the members of the Scottish bar, and since immortalized in "Guy Mannering," by the genius of Scott, under the title of "High Jinks." This institution, if it may be so called, is "The Grand Court of the ——— Circuit." It is held twice during each round of the judges, at the two principal cities, at one of which our story now lies.

In every assize town, except the mere minors, the bar mess dine together at least one day during the assize week. Here all the members of the horse-hair-helmet-and-silk-and-stuff-robes order, refresh their legal souls with intellectual converse, and mortify their fainting bodies on turtle, venison, champagne, and claret, preparatory to the grander fast given a day or two afterwards by the judges, on claret, champagne, venison, and turtle. Then before the bashful gaze of the juniors, sit those illustrious hosts, to whose ermined state each aspiring young Coke disclaims the slightest thought of looking, and internally vows, at the same time, the most unalterable resolves to attain—of which vows, we may just remark in passing, that fortunately for the bench, where one is kept, a thousand at least are broken.

The nature of these grand courts will perhaps be best shown by at once introducing our readers to the mystical arena of one of them; merely premising, of their two grand features—first, that the usual order of all sublunary matters is reversed—the first being last, and the last first; and next, that not even the Eleusinian mysteries, the sports of the fairies, or the enigma of the Cabala itself, can be half so strictly kept, or so jealously preserved, as at the transactions of the august body we are venturing to approach. While, therefore, we are ready to vouch for the fidelity of our picture, in its main points, we may vary some minute details—possibly from not knowing better, possibly from wishing not to discover the "*open sesame*" of our information. For scribblers too have their privilege, and though among the most retiring of mankind, now and then venture upon acts of audacity that would annihilate the unlicensed. No scene of harmless fun and jocularity can be greater than that which these courts often presented; all license of speech and drollery is encouraged, and everything taken in good part.

Now Dick Doubtful and the Imperative Mood lodged together. We will explain—Dick Doubtful had a bedroom in which a cat could *not* be swung, and a sitting-room in which a cat *could* be swung, at the moderate sum of five guineas for the assize week. In the same house the Imperative Mood had a sitting-room in which a cat could *not* be swung, but a bedroom in which a cat *could* be swung, at the same reasonable price. Now the worth and virtues of these two gentlemen will at once appear, when I assure the world that neither of them, either directly or indirectly, ever did attempt to swing a cat in either of the aforesaid rooms. Now the Imperative mood was the style and title bestowed on Charles Periwinkle by his brother-robe,

Horace Straitonend—a compliment duly returned by the quality and designation, added to many others, of Sir Horace de Pump—so given to him from his chambers in Pump-court, Middle Temple; a spot illustrious since the days of the knight templars for the abundance of water yielded by its well, and the paucity drank by its dwellers—a title most becoming Sir Horace, the father of the temperance societies, who made a vow, and kept it too, of never drinking anything stronger than brandy.

"Why, Dick!" said the Imperative, as the former entered his sitting-room, dressed for mess; for notwithstanding the deep gloom in which he was plunged, Charles could not keep his love of quizzing without some outbreak, "come here and let me look at you with the candles. Oh, if you intend to come it as strong as that, no man at mess will be able to draw near you!"

"Do you think so? Bless me! what's the matter?" demanded Dick, in great perturbation.

"Matter! why, you've actually combed and brushed your hair; your white handkerchief doesn't seem to have been worn above twice; not more than one stocking is down at heel, and actually the chain cable on your waistcoat looks almost as bright as if it had been washed. Why, you surely must be going to preside as junior, or you never could have turned out so fine."

"Bah—bah! Periwinkle! you knew that a week ago. But I must be off; it only wants three quarters of an hour to dinner time, and there's the wine, the waiters, and Lord knows what, to see to. You may call the junior *president*, if you please, but I call it butler, lacquey, groom, and boots, with a seat at table." And away ran Dick to the large room in which the mess was held.

At last the worst of his sorrows were over. The dinner, with all its formalities, concluded; when one of the juniors rose, and, as crier of the grand court, made the following proclamation, in a stentorian voice—

"All you who owe suit and service to the 'Grand Court of the ——— Circuit,' draw near and render the same on behalf of all such matters as shall be now brought before you. The officers of the grand court will take their stations."

The holding of the court had now commenced; and, as all its officers are juniors, two more arose—the door-keepers, and having locked the doors, and pocketed the key, that no one might depart thence, or intrude upon them, the marshal rose and resumed his seat, to show himself in readiness, and Dick Doubtful opened the proceedings of the court by calling "Mr. Solicitor General."

In answer to this honourable appellation, rose a gentleman, whose florid countenance was marked by a look of extreme good humour and vivacity; a clever sharp grey eye, and that good looking cast of countenance which then even was helping a vigorous intellect to get as quickly at the heart of a juryman as any that was ever contrived by those who have either preceded or followed him to the bench. Nothing on earth could be more delusive than his style of

speaking. Apparently he would make you believe he knew nothing about the matter; had none of its art, nor a particle of its manœuvring; he affected to stammer, spoke in a low tone, and quizzed the "eloquence" of his opponents; then, when he had wound his hearers into believing that any effect he produced was solely owing to the justice and reason of his cause, he would put his arguments in the most astute and clever manner possible; and weaving to perfection the spotless colours of candour, took care to wrap up his facts in very robes of *scarlet*. Such was Mr. Crimson in his day, one of the most formidable opponents at the bar.

"Now, gentlemen of the grand court," continued he, after opening his speech, to which our space forces us to do the injustice of abridgment, "the first matter before you is the appointment of one of your chief officers, the *Attorney-general*. All important as this post is, we are happy in having two most eligible candidates. The first on the list is of respectable standing, Mr. Harry Versatile Botherem, more commonly called Harry Botherem.—(Applause.)—Well he bears out his name. The surname of Botherem, I need not remark, is one that has always been of high standing and consideration at the bar. That he either is or will be the Lord Harry, seems already settled—at least among the ladies. As to his being versatile, I am well assured that no reader of the 'Blue-wasp-with-the-yellow-back,' review can entertain a doubt of that. The most overwhelming proofs exist, not only in the aforesaid Indigo and Gamboge Journal, but in ten encyclopædias, eighteen magazines, four histories, forty-four miscellanies, two poems, half a dozen novels, *one* set of '*Memoirs*,' nine hundred and ninety pamphlets, together with endless 'new editions,' including one of the 'Faery *Queen*,' which created great disappointment at the time of its publication, from the badness of the Italian *proofs*, though pulled on very costly paper. I say, in all these, the versatility of my learned friend is brilliantly apparent; nothing, gentlemen, surpasses his knowledge of chemistry but his acquaintance with engineering, his engineering is excelled only by his theology, his theology only beat by his knowledge of whist, his whist only competed by his hydrostatics, his hydrostatics by his pyrotechnics; and nothing, if I may use an expression somewhat familiar as well as apposite—nothing takes the shine out of his pyrotechnics but his Sunday schooling. Then again the worth of his Sunday schooling is only to be outweighed by his botany, his botany by his cross-examination, and the last by his art in compliments.—Not that I mean in the least degree to insinuate my learned friend was ever known to 'gloze.' No! his is that style of elegant compliment, to which nothing can approximate but his art of sarcasm. Then again, gentlemen, his sarcasm is only distanced by his geology, his geology by his dexterity at operative surgery, and his surgery by his devotion to the sex. Nor can we pause here, for his devotion to the sex, I make bold to affirm, was never rivalled by aught except his mathematics, his mathematics by his skill in languages, and his languages by his connoisseurship in foreign brandy and wines. I have heard something whispered touch-

ing his knowledge of drill and platoon exercise, and book-keeping by double-entry; nautical manœuvres, and skill in the science and practice of medicine. But as I am given to understand that these are his mere lighter amusements, to which he is only driven on a pinch, I pass them, one and all. Out of kindness, doubtless, to his brothers of the robe, however, he has left one little acquisition untouched—a barren rock in the ocean of his acquirements unexplored. Need I tell you, gentlemen, it is the *law!* And it is on this ground he comes forward—no doubt you will say properly—to claim the appointment of *Attorney-general.*—(loud cheers.) If, after what I have stated, there should be any doubt of his fitness among the sceptical gentlemen of the grand court,—(cries of "No, no.") I could give further and most abundant proof of his qualification as a candidate. Not from anything I have seen, nor from anything I know—of course that would not be evidence before this august tribunal—but from what I have actually heard at seventh, eighth, ninth, aye and even tenth-hand!"

"Quite fit—quite fit—proceed!"

"I thought, gentlemen, no one could doubt his fitness. The other candidate, then, is Mr. Youngmutton, a gentleman scarcely less worthy of your choice than the former. Mr. Youngmutton's eligibility rests on a precedent that I am sure will carry the greatest weight with the court. I allude to the well-known case of "Crossgrain *v.* Gabblefast,"—Joe Miller's Reports, folio 5371. That was an action for a nuisance, brought against the defendant, who slept in the same room with the plaintiff, for speaking the German language in his sleep, to the annoyance of the latter. To this the defendant pleaded in confession and avoidance, that true it was he had a habit of speaking in his sleep, but not in the language complained of in the declaration—the German language—and therefore no nuisance. The plaintiff, to support his case, endeavoured to show that the language used by the defendant must have been the *German* language; and for this purpose called several most unimpeachable witnesses, to prove that defendant's brother played the *German* flute. Defendant's counsel here objected that playing the German flute was a distinct nuisance in itself, and that the proving any such unlawful act was an attempt to raise a collateral issue; and Chief Justice Crotchet, after much doubt, and a most able argument, rejected this evidence as inadmissible, and the plaintiff was non-suited. Now, as this court always rules and holds contrary to every other court in the realm, I submit that such evidence was of the very best description; and that *pari passu* Mr. Youngmutton's claim to be Attorney-general of the 'Grand Court of the ——— Circuit' is indisputable. It rests on this fact—his elder brother was, in like manner, lately and successfully defended by the Attorney-general of the king, in an action brought to recover heavy damages for an imagined trespass on some *very desirable* premises near *Norton Falgate.* Now, strong as this claim is, it may perhaps be imprudent to weaken it by one less potent; still it is but justice to say, that when he came into court on circuit for the first time, not a

leaf of one of his law-books was found to be cut—if I except, indeed, the first dozen or so of Blackstone, which were cut *out*. Moreover, it should be stated, that nobody ever found him in court till at least an hour and a half after the judges had arrived—a degree of modesty that cannot be too much praised. In addition, I have only to add, that he sings a most excellent song, and can carry his three bottles with any gentleman on circuit; qualities which, I need not tell you, are, in an Attorney-general, most indispensably requisite."

The solicitor-general having resumed his seat, the various excellencies of the rival candidates and friends were discussed; somewhat puzzled with so much worth, opinions were very various. At last a member of the court proposed that they should both be seen, and for this purpose mounted on chairs. The idea was instantly carried into effect. Two chairs were set aside, and the candidates ordered to ascend. They did so; but no sooner had the eagle eyes of the company lighted on them, than there arose a universal shout—"A fine!—a fine!" Down jumped Botherem; but it was all too late. In an unlucky moment, he had that morning indued his nether man into a pair of inexpressibles that mingled grey and black; while the proper canonicals of the court was composed of black only. A fine, therefore, was inevitable; and the election to the post of attorney-general having fallen on him, it was resolved that he should experience the lenity of the court, in having his fine reduced to four *gallons*, the technical term for guineas; and be ordered in addition to go through with the case of "Litigate *v.* Standonpoints." Now, as this case has had the fate of all illustrious martyrs, to go through many persecutions—as a fragment has been treasured up here, and a portion enshrined there, till many honest people doubt where flourished the original source from which it sprung, we will here give the whole of this one of the most celebrated cases in all the books; boldly asserting, that if this be not the parent from which all similar have been basely fabricated—why then—we are much mistaken—that's all!

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## CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

### CONTAINS THE CASE OF LITIGATE VERSUS STANDONPOINTS WITH OTHER MATTERS.

But what sort of man was the new *attorney-general?*—No one who ever saw, could possibly forget him. A pair of sharp brilliant eyes, that wandered incessantly *hic et ubique*, sufficiently answered, at the onset, for his ability, even if they had not been supported in this certificate by a nose of the most splendid—but, if we are to describe his nose, we must lay down our pen in flat despair. Sterne must have

had it in prophetic anticipation when he wrote his memorable Chapter on Noses, and the stranger with the crimson, plush, and silver fringe, did not possess one more unique. It is, indeed, difficult to speak with sufficient respect of a nose worthy to have wagged over the woolsack, or led the House of Lords, or be hailed with applause from the Institute of France to the Commons of Great Britain, while, at every sarcasm uttered by the lips beneath—neither few nor slight sometimes, let us observe—the organ above has ever been accustomed to give an expressive rebound; so that, could we learn what passed in the nose's mind, we should find it taking all the credit of the tongue's attacks, to which it certainly did give double point and venom.

"The first duty imposed upon me," said this formidable *attorney-general*, rising, "is to return my thanks to the grand court for the honour they have conferred. It is an honour which has left me in debt in every way;—materially, to the extent of four gallons for the unhappy complexion of my pantaloons;—metaphorically, to the court for the post bestowed;—and most ironically, to my learned friend for the manner in which he has been pleased to speak of my poor capacities! The gallons I shall be able to pay; to the court I give my thanks; but to my learned colleague, Mr. Solicitor-General, I can only express my delight, that he had to speak in my praise, and not I in his!"—Twitch went the nose.—"I do assure him, I could not have urged of him one-fiftieth part of what he has been pleased to assert of me!"—Twitch.—"I should have been the last man on earth to mention any sort of 'versatility' with his name, unless, indeed, it might be a little in the matter of politics."—Twitch, twitch.—Cheers.—"No stretch of fancy, I can assure him, should ever have tempted me to say, that any thing was 'brilliantly apparent' in him, unless guarded by that protecting form of speech, the 'lusus a non lacendo.'"—Twitch.—"As little, I protest, would I have breathed the least suspicion of his acquaintance with engineering, theology, whist, hydrostatics, pyrotechnics, and criticism."—Twitch.—"I solemnly declare I should have been the last man in the world, rashly to have attributed to him the least perception of the benefits of Sunday schooling, botany, or cross-examination."—Twitch.—"As to his art in compliments, to mention that would be as idle as to have hinted one word on his sarcasm. The Grand Court has heard both; and perhaps, gentlemen, in this matter *you* may be able to command the art, which, I am sorry to confess, *I* do not, of distinguishing, namely, the one from the other."—Twitch, twitch.—Continued applause.—"As for his skill in geology, I am almost petrified at the thought of such a charge against so innocent a man. I am sure, also, that the same might be fairly said of the rest of the long catalogue of his proscribed arts; but, as he has *not* kindly handed over to me the pocket dictionary of the sciences which he used himself, I will at once pass to the last he named—*the law*. This, you will remember, was the only point on which he made no charge whatever. I am sorry I cannot imitate, but must reverse, the example. We may acquit him freely of all the rest, but must convict him here. You have all, gentleman, had the most splendid opportunities for ob-

servation, and I appeal to you if I am not correct in asserting, that however arduously my learned friend either has, or ever may, devote himself to its drudgery, yet still, long as his name may be *Crimson*, he never, in law, can be deep *re*(a)*d*."—Twitch, twitch, twitch, twitch.—Loud applause.

The attorney then proceeded to prefer several heavy and serious charges against various seniors of the circuit, in the same peculiar style, and having pressed for convictions in all, which the court was most mercifully pleased to award, we will just mention the names of the prisoners—the crimes of which they were found guilty—and the sentences passed on them.—

The leader of the circuit, for presuming to beg pardon of an attorney after treading on his toes—fine and imprisonment: ten minutes in his chair, and half a dozen of claret. Mr. Serjeant Sharpshins, for daring to ask after a solicitor's wife, with whom, though the charge could not be proved, he was suspected of dining a month before—fine: a dozen and a half of port. Mr. Quickthought, king's counsel, for taking luncheon at his brother's hotel—fine: a dozen of sherry. Mr. Buffer, stuff-gownsman, of twenty years standing, for venturing on the heresy of preferring silk to worsted—imprisonment and hard labour: half an hour in his chair, and to drink three glasses of hock without taking breath. Mr. Greenhorn a junior counsel, for too much familiarity with his first client—the solicitor observed it was a fine day; Mr. Greenhorn replied "Very"—fine: a dozen of champagne. Various minor offences were then disposed of, and the crier of the court called on the case of Litigate *versus* Standonpoints.

"Cocky, will you open the pleadings?" said Botherem to a junior sitting next him.

Up jumped as sharp a looking little fellow as ever made needle ashamed of its point, with a figure somewhat redundant on both sides of the question; the bust was of the most complete proportion; the legs, however, were below the standard, and this made his stature small; he always spoke with one hand in his breast, and the other holding an eye glass, at short, quick, intervals. It having been agreed that the junior was to stand for the judge, and the first six on either hand, the jury, the cause proceeded.

"May it please your lordship:—gentlemen of the jury, in this case William Litigate, of Queer-street, in the city and county of World's-end, is the plaintiff, and John Standonpoints, of Slaughter-house-square, in the same city and county, is the defendant. This is an action on the case. The declaration states, that on the fourth of March, in the year of our lord—"

Here the learned counsel was interrupted by Serjeant Nearsight, at the bottom of the long table, remarking, that "the learned counsel ought to stand up when he addressed the court."

"Sir, I'm on the table already," said the little gentleman, somewhat warmly. "What do you want?—would you wish me to get into the chandelier?"

The serjeant begged pardon, he "did *not* wish the learned counsel

to get up into the chandelier—certainly not. He was quite *warm*, as well as *luminous* enough already."

"As I was about to tell you, gentlemen, when interrupted, On the fourth of March"—

"I'm sorry, my lud, to arrest this important case a second time, but I rise to order," said the attorney-general, pointing to the door, where a member of the mess, who had joined that day for the first time, was insisting on leaving the room, while the door-keeper as stoutly maintained that no one could depart till the grand court adjourned at nine o'clock. Sir Bobadil Bashful, however, a young baronet, who was the retiring party, insisted that he would go, and nobody should keep him, having, in fact—though this did not appear—made an appointment with his mamma, who came circuit to take care of him.

"Well," said the doorkeeper, "apply to the court for leave."

"No—he knew nothing of any court—why should he?"

"Well, then, the door-keeper would apply."

"Not at all—he knew nothing either of courts or door-keepers—he had dined, and had enough, and must begone."

Dick Doubtful here interfered, "What was the matter?"

"Why, sir," answered Bashful, "I have an appointment which is pressing, and I must go to keep it."

"An appointment, sir!" replied Dick, most gravely; "the court are sorry to see a young gentleman of your promise falling into habits like these at your very onset in life—the court must interfere to protect you, since you cannot take—the court cannot think of your keeping an appointment. Door-keeper! on no account allow Sir Bobadil Bashful to pass out!"

"Sir, I don't understand you." Roars of laughter, and cries of "Julia will wait!—Julia will wait!"

"Gentlemen, I don't understand you," cried poor Sir Bobadil, red as a turkey. Here the laughter and shouting increased. "Gentlemen! I scorn your unworthy insinuation, and I will go."

"Then, if you go, you never can return," said Dick.

"I never wish to return," quoth Sir Bobadil; "and never will."

Here some of his friends getting round him, popped him back into his seat, and kept him there, *vi et armis*, till the hubbub subsiding, the trial went on.

"Gentlemen of the jury," said the opening counsel, "at last, perhaps, I may be permitted to tell you, that on the fourth of March last, the defendant unlawfully blocked up, by his person, the public footway in the city of World's-end, by taking the wall of the plaintiff, thereby causing the latter to tread on a piece of orange-peel, which he had put in his way, and be thrown on his nose, which he then, there, and thereupon, did break, injure, damnify, and destroy, to the damage of one hundred pounds. There are forty-three counts in the declaration, which are slightly varied to meet the facts of the case. The first count state the defendant to have been, at the time of the offence, walking in the streets—the second, that he was standing still—the third, that he was standing on the right leg—the fourth, that he was

standing on the left—the fifth, that the orange-peel was the red side uppermost—the sixth, that it was the white—the seventh,"—

"We should almost doubt, Mr. Weathershins, whether you need go through all the forty-three," said the chief baron.

"Oh! if your lordship is satisfied, certainly not—it can make no difference. Well, then, gentlemen of the jury, defendant has pleaded, to the whole declaration, *not guilty*; besides several special pleas, to each of the counts on all of which issue is joined."

The attorney-general rose, and throwing into his manner all the old-fashioned gravity of the last century, and dressing thus up with a style and tone to which paper can do no justice, proceeded:—

"May it please your *ludship*—gentlemen of the jury—during the many years which I have had the honour of being at the bar, it has often been my lot, like that of all counsel, to rise most painfully impressed with the responsibility of the cause intrusted to their hands, and the delicate nature of its facts. Gentlemen! I do assure you a more painful, a less agreeable, a more distressing, a more responsible, a less ordinary, or more flagitious case, I never was engaged in, in the whole course of my professional career. Gentlemen! I shall not detain you long; a few words will show the cruel wrongs—the crying injury—that has been done to us. Gentlemen! my client is, I am instructed, a person of the highest respectability, and of as old a family as any gentleman in this distinguished country. He is a man advanced in life, and therefore not to be subjected to the brutal violence of youth. He is possessed of ample means, and therefore one who could never stoop to bring an action for the mere sake of lucre. As for the law of the case, gentlemen, I leave that in the hands of his *ludship*. No one is more able than my *lud* to point out each nice distinction, where no difference exists. It will suffice for me only so far to anticipate his *ludship*, as to recal to you the beautiful compendium of all legal science, treated of by Stevens, in his Treatise on the Heads of Action. My *lud* will correct me if I am wrong; but that writer, I take it, divides law into five parts. The first, is the beginning, or *incipiendum*—the second, the uncertainty, or *dubitandum*—the third, the delay, or *puzzliendum*—the fourth, the replication, without *endum*—and fifth, the *monstrum horrendum*. Do not think, gentlemen, by my reciting this passage, that I wish to work upon your passions. No! I appeal to your judgment! The *incipiendum* you gained by instalments from my learned friend—the *dubitandum* is the doubtful character of defendant—the *puzzliendum* is shown in the forty-three counts of the declaration, which, though my learned friend, Mr. Weathershins, did draw them, I venture unequivocally to assert, are a masterpiece of the delicate framing of an action, to meet the emergencies of the case—while the *replication without endum*, you will shortly discover in the speech of my learned friend, no mean part of those proceedings with which the defendant has so infamously swelled the costs in this cause, and clogged at every step our advance to the sacred footstool of justice—nor is the fifth part less

wanting; I say, gentlemen, the *monstrum horrendum* of the case is here—that a man should be found so shameless as to defend, in court, conduct so atrocious as defendant's. What are the facts of the case? On the fourth of March last, we were engaged in our avocations, proceeding down Queer-street, in the city of World's-end. Now, Queer-street, gentlemen, is very narrow at one pass, where two ancient Druidical remains are bound to be kept up by one of those corporation charters, which seem to have been expressly instituted for the preservation of every nuisance; and we being pressed for time, and hurrying on our business, met defendant standing, or loitering, in the middle of the footpath, eating an orange—a cruel, wanton thing to do at any time in such a place; but more cruel, more wanton still, gentlemen, when done at the very busiest period of the day—at noon. What, then! can human flesh and blood possibly conceive it? that this atrocious wretch, bred up and inured to scenes of bloodshed and horror, as a butcher, could be guilty of the enormity, the crying barbarity, of setting a trap for the lives of his fellow creatures, in a crowded thoroughfare, in a populous city, when the bright and busy tide of life was flowing fast around. And how did he do this?—Why, gentlemen, with more than fiend-like contrivance—with more than snake-like cunning—by trapping in the very middle of the path—what do you think, gentlemen?—why, pieces of orange-peel; some of them absolutely with the white side up, and some with the red—a colour but too typical, I regret to say, of the sanguinary intentions of the wretch that placed them there. What was the inevitable consequence, gentlemen?—Now, mark the issue!—Address your minds to this!—A fiery-spirited charger in a coach, was coming by at a fearful pace. We, anxious, as we well might be, to escape the imminent peril of its heels, saw the space vacant between defendant and the wall, and made for it. He, with ferocious malignity, blocked up the only avenue of escape by his bulky and resistless person—precipitated us in an instant upon the snare he had laid—our feet were taken from us—some one struck us on the head—we were dashed with violence to the ground—and on coming to ourselves, the blood of our heart's core bedewed the pavement. Our nose, which I will prove to you, gentlemen, incontestibly, was before this a nose of the most exact symmetry and worth, was now broken—wrecked—destroyed in its proportions for ever—flattened to the cheek, and fearfully mutilated! And where was the defendant?—ready to assist us?—proffering us support?—offering us aid? Nothing of the sort! Gentlemen, you will scarcely credit it when I tell you, he was leaning against our own house, and holding his sides for laughter. I see, gentlemen, you are ready to weep for the humanity that can produce such a wretch! One word more, and I have done. The defendant, not content with his barbarity, has brought against us a cross action, for the damage done to his watch, which our head struck in falling—a damage, gentlemen, which we clearly have no right to pay; and the attempt to extort it from us, increases tenfold the conduct of de-

fendant, which you are called upon to visit. For—so I am informed—so I am instructed—the watch in question was not the defendant's watch, but merely lent to him by a watchmaker who is repairing his own. The watchmaker, however, conceiving his own to be worth double that of defendant's—and, gentlemen, it would be worthless enough if it were not—brings his action against defendant for the difference. Thus, no less than three actions are, I may say, in a manner dependent on your verdict. In conclusion, gentlemen, I will call witnesses to show you the state of our nose—not only what it is—but what it was—and what it will be; for our client, gentlemen, has since this brutal maiming been nicknamed Nosey—a title he may bear for the rest of his days. Gracious Heavens, gentlemen! is one of the greatest blessings in nature to be thus perverted? What, then! were noses given us for this? Clearly not! Then, gentlemen, I ask you what for? A nose is neither an eye, nor an ear, nor a mouth, but a nose, gentlemen. It is intended neither to see with, nor to listen with, nor to devour with, but ornaments the countenance, as the sun does the heavens! throwing life and expression round it, and inhaling every sweet and delicious odour that earth can offer up to it, in propitiatory oblation. As I said before, my lud will fully explain the law of the case. I cheerfully leave it in his ludship's hands. At yours I claim the amount of damages set forth—100 guineas; and I entreat you solemnly to examine your own souls, whether there is any gentleman in that box who would part with his nose for so moderate a sum?"

The plaintiff's witnesses were now called, and proved the facts on the very best circuit evidence, which is hearsay. So strict, indeed, was his "ludship," that a case of this importance should be decided only by the purest testimony, that two witnesses were rejected for having some sort of a *knowledge* of the facts, though very slight; together with another, for having seen the affray, though from no nearer a distance than the other end of the street, with seventeen carts and carriages of one sort or another between them. Mr. Solicitor General then rose.

"May it please your lordship—gentlemen of the jury—of all the absurd, ridiculous, preposterous cases that revengeful dispositions and grasping avarice have ever forced into court, this, I think, you will term the worst. Don't be alarmed, gentlemen. I'm not going to inflict on you any more 'eloquence.' My learned friend's—Mr. Attorney's—was not only enough for him, it was quite enough for me—I'm mistaken if it's not more than enough for you. *I* don't pretend to that style of thing—first because I couldn't if I would, and next because I wouldn't if I could. Yet still you must not suppose my client such a fool as to come here without having a word to say for himself. Now, let's have a *little* glance at the facts. Who is the plaintiff? The respectable old gentleman who, my learned friend tells you, is of ancient family, substantial possessions, and advanced age! Oh! it's all quite true! No one who knows Mr. Attorney, and prizes him as I do, ever dreamed of his ability to colour the

slightest fact. Yet still, you know, a little *explanation*, gentlemen. —(cheers.) The ancient family is the family of Moses, and a very ancient wide-awake family it is, for plaintiff is an old Jew clothesman. The substantial possessions of plaintiff, also, no one would be insane enough to doubt. The Jew clothesman has been also a Jew money-lender for the last sixty years. His advanced age is a truth not less notorious. The usurious old creature at seventy-six, with one leg in the grave, hobbles into court with the other, and brings with him too a cause more lame than himself; for this, as we say, hasn't a leg to stand upon at all. Why, gentlemen, old Litigate, I am instructed, is so feeble as to be obliged, when he travels to country in summer time, to hire a boy to go before him, and avert the danger of his getting knocked down by the butterflies. Yet this infirm old man, without a relation to inherit all the gold already heaped together, must venture through the most crowded thoroughfares, to make a few farthings at the risk of his life, with a stinking old clothes-bag on his shoulder! Why, I say, gentlemen, if such a man had no nose at all, it would be a blessing for him. In that case, to quote my learned friend's eloquent appeal, it would be unable to detect 'the sweet and delicate odour offered up to it in propitiatory oblation'—by the rags behind. As for 'oblation,' gentlemen, my learned friend did not condescend to explain what he meant by that; we must therefore take it, I suppose, as his last designation of second-hand slops. And now for this redoubtable *nose*, respecting which my learned friend has so loudly blown the trumpet in the new moon, as plaintiff's ancestor, King David, says. To hear Mr. Attorney, one would think it was the nose of Antinous. Now, gentlemen, we may have heard some value attached to a 'Jew's eye,' but I deny that the premises ever can be extended to Jews' noses. Why, what came out on cross-examination of my friend's own witnesses? Why, that it was but a hook-nose at the best—and a hook-nose, too, in a very bad state of repair. The bridge of it, gentlemen, like some of your county bridges, was in the arch as rickety as a young lord's acceptance—broken and patched, from innumerable rows and quarrels! Mr. Attorney, too, should have shown that plaintiff had at least some years to run in his lease of this precious property. At seventy-six, he could not reasonably expect to have even four years longer tenure. Now, what would that be a year? Talk of a hundred guineas! Why, it would be six-and-twenty pounds worth of nose in a year! Address yourselves to that fact, gentlemen! Either plaintiff must have a most extraordinary consumption of the article, or even a Jew himself shouldn't be allowed to make as much of his nose as that. We've all heard that Mr. Attorney has both great experience in and partiality to the '*noes*' line, but it really strikes me this is carrying it too far. And now, gentlemen, if we may for a moment take leave of the leading feature of the case, what aspect is worn by the rest? It is one, I am sure, which you would be sorry to countenance for a moment. My client, who is a most respectable butcher, and well to do in the world, was eating an orange in the street, as he lawfully might; and

seeing plaintiff running towards him, and knowing the querulous character of Litigate, he naturally drew aside to his own proper right hand, the wall. Now, plaintiff, who, for aught we know, was alarmed by the coming of a bee or a butterfly—"

"No—no, Mr. Solicitor," interrupted the attorney-general, rising, "state the case fairly—it was a coach."

"Well, a coach then be it. For aught I know, it might have been Queen Mab's coach, in size no bigger than a shell, drawn by a fairy team. Well, this alarming apparition then frightened Litigate from his propriety. He tried to pass on his wrong side—he endeavoured to take the wall—and failing in that, was next, much against his will, obliged to give up the attempt of passing through my client, which, I assure you, gentlemen, he tried very hard to do, and stepping voluntarily, and—as I am instructed—with the wilful and double predetermination of breaking our watch and bringing this suit, on a piece of orange-peel accidentally dropped by us, fell down! What, then, gentlemen, are we to be responsible for the malignity of his premeditated fall? Monstrous!—What!—because we respectfully decline either to buy his old clothes, or to sell him our new ones—what! because we will neither borrow his money, nor give him ours—is he deliberately, and under colour of the law, to attack and destroy an unsuspecting watch, he knowing it not to be so hard as his own head, and then to put his hand into our pocket—not to pull out the splinters, gentlemen, —nothing of the sort—he wouldn't be content with that—but to wring from us an hundred guineas for an old, patched up, broken nose, that never was worth the handkerchief. Mr. Attorney has been pleased to quote Stevens; I admit the weight of that authority in this court. But what says Balderdash, gentlemen? a writer of more authority, if possible, than even Stevens. Take the celebrated case of the King *v.* Trumpeter, p. 281, '*Omnes drownderunt qui swimaway non potuerunt.*' Doesn't that clearly prove, that he who can't stand up, must be content to fall down? Again, the memorable maxim of the law comes in here, 'Ille qui weakus est—ad wallum sneakus est,'—a maxim beautiful in itself, and, if possible, even more exquisitely rendered by Mr. Attorney, in one of his varied publications. Thus—

'The man what's weak,
To the wall must sneak.'

After that, gentlemen, you might suppose Mr. Attorney's lips would be closed, but this, I must do him the justice to say, is a task that even he himself has never been able to accomplish. As this is generally a sore point, perhaps he will excuse me for dwelling on it a little. And then, too—" a nickname, he would have said; but here his eye fell horror stricken on a top-knotted servant, who from ignorance or stupidity had remained in the room the whole time. An intruder on the "Witches' Sabbath" would not have been greeted with such indignation.—"The infinite rascal!—What should be his punishment?"

But our space reminds us we must close the chapter.

## CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

### WHICH CONCLUDES THE REPORT OF "LITIGATE *v.* STANDONPOINTS."

We have already stated how great was the consternation of some members of the Grand Court, and how unmitigable the indignation of others, on beholding within their secret precincts the intruding animal, in a pair of shoulder-knots and hair-powder. After sundry rash devices as to the mode in which his life should be taken, by those members in the immediate vicinity of the president, one of the most moderate proposed that the offender should be made to take a bottle of cold water internally, and two bottles of port externally—the former, in other words, being poured down his throat, and the latter over his person, and in this state kicked down stairs. In vain the luckless livery-man yelped and prayed—he fell into vigorous hands. When the court gave him over unto judgment, the "grisly pursuivants" listened to no one word respecting the exchange proposed by the waiter, nor attended in the least to the argument, by which it was attempted to be set forth, how both the stomach and the uniform of the offender would benefit by the substitution of the liquids, one for the other. Judgment was duly had upon him, in manner and form aforesaid, until, as the culprit afterwards described it, he felt as if he had been made to swallow the Falls of Niagara, and then dipped in the Red Sea; and sanguine enough in truth he looked, as drenched with port-wine, pre-eminent on a buff livery-coat, he was expelled from the legal paradise in which he had been caught transgressing. This matter disposed of, the trial of Litigate *v.* Standonpoints proceeded.

"When, I ask, was plaintiff ever without a nickname?" resumed Mr. Solicitor General. "It is not the question of a new nickname, gentlemen, but simply a nickname amended; and I put it to you, gentlemen, whether 'Nosey' isn't better than 'Moshes,' any day in the week? to say nothing of the rest of his days. In conclusion, gentlemen, so sure am I of the propriety of your views in this case, that I shall trouble you with no witnesses, but simply put in, and read to you, the charter of the corporation of the city of World's-end, where this occurred, together with a bye law founded on that charter. The charter proves the right to govern the approaches to the market-place, in one of which this accident happened, by all necessary bye-laws, and the bye-law directs all passengers to take the right of their neighbours in passing. This wise act of legislation, I am sure, gentlemen, you will see the necessity of supporting; and in so doing, you will teach plaintiff, however late for his pocket, that, so far from the case of his nose being one which should ever be heard within the sacred walls of justice, it is, on the contrary, one which, it would be best for all parties, should be blown out of court."

The solicitor-general having resumed his seat, the charter and bye-

law were put in and read. The bye-law was as described, and the clause of the charter in the following classic form :—

Extract from the Corporation Charter of World's-end.

"Item nos lieges amatis hunc hic concedimus et omnibus temporibus, et weatheris dedimus, pro usu proprio nec nemini elsi jura ad omnes ligandos et makare, in market-womanibus pueris et puellis. Quos ad hoc emporium cum goodibus sunt passi, super mulos aut æquuos, aut pannieros-jackassi cum kiddibus, aut lambibus, aut calvibus, aut gregebus, aut ovibus, aut poultribus, aut bovibus. Peasibus et beanibus, cum greenibus et cabbagibus, inganibus et leakibus, horse-raddish et asparagus. Nec minus programina-vegetabilia; cauliferi, artichoki, parsnipii, parsleyi, turnippæ, aut brocoli. Etiam fructi in omnes, sint peachi, sint peari, sive pomæ, aut mellonæ, et formosæ nectari, aut stulti baccorum in vulgos goose-goggos, qui in usu et homines sunt etiam ad hoggos."

The attorney-general now rose and claimed his reply, when Doubtful, chief baron, said—

"Mr. Attorney, though deeply grieved to stop this important case at this stage, we are inclined to spare you your reply. There are seventeen points of very great difficulty on which we think you ought not to be permitted to go to the jury. The first is, that neither party has any right of action; but this might be got over. The next is—"

Attorney and solicitor generals rising and speaking together—"My lud, if that be your ludship's opinion, we should be most sorry to take up your ludship's valuable time, and the time of the court, by asking for the other sixteen."

"Exactly, Mr. Attorney and Mr. Solicitor; we were about to say, that the other sixteen must be reserved for a written judgment at the next meeting of the court. For it is of the last importance that the course of the law should be fixed and consistent throughout. It may, however, be consolatory to your clients to know, that such is our deep opinion of the merits of this case, that if both parties to the suit agree to a *stet processus*, they may, on the payment of all costs, have leave to begin again."

All the counsel retained on either side here rose, and making a profound bow to the bench, their leader said—

"My *lud*, we assure your ludship, that your ludship's decision is one which will give the most infinite satisfaction to our clients."

## CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

### INTRODUCES "EXCELLENT JACK ALIBI" TO THE READER'S KIND CONSIDERATION.

During the time the masters had been making merry, their subordinates had not been altogether idle. The clerks who, of course, were not to be left a whit behind any of the rest of the world in their etiquette, have, on the circuit, a gathering together, which they dignify by the term of a mess of their own, affecting to go through all the forms of their betters, so much so, that unless rumour be a greater story-teller than ordinary, the clerk's "mess" had determined on giving a dinner to the clerk of his majesty's attorney-general, who had just arrived on a special retainer. The clerk, however, who, it seems, when in his cups, was rather over-gallant than over-discreet, was unable during dinner to refrain from saluting the attendant bar-maids. This unthinking conduct in so distinguished a guest, drew down first a remonstrance, and then a reprimand from the chair. The guest rebelled—the chair insisted—the company divided—some took one side—some another—till at last the madness reached to such an extraordinary pitch, as to prompt the chairman actually to send off to the junior of the bar to settle their dispute—an appeal which, of course, ended in the dismissal of the offender from his master's employment, since clerks generally perform the duties of something like a writing valet, only with still more reserve and hauteur intervening between themselves and their employers, though a solitary case will occur of an old follower of superior abilities and qualifications, becoming somewhat licensed to transgress, like Kickup, who, having got the entire mastery of Sir Job, was somewhat difficult for Charles to keep in his exact position. This many a time and oft had brought on him a threat of discharge, but he always found means, by ample and timely repentance, to avert the consequences of his indiscretion. On this evening he was, however, beyond all danger. The attack of Black Bess on his lip, made him take a secluded meal, and in the evening, according to appointment, he called on Costs-in-the-cause. This worthy he found busily engaged with his pipe and brother, for the pipe had infinite preference, in his mind, over his relation; while poor but taxed Costs who looked like a jelly gradually working down in the sun, sat at a distance half asleep, thinking all the while that he attended to a loud mysterious conversation, which the respectable head of his firm was carrying on with a huge sinister-looking specimen of humanity, that stood nearly six feet seven inches, listening attentively, with contracted and small wandering eye, to the wily discourse of the thin attorney.

"Good morning—or, I should say, good evening—Mr. Kickup. Pray take a chair. Which will you have?—long cut, or chopped

negro-head, or, perhaps, as a legal gentleman, you'd like *returns*?—Ha, ha, ha! Here's a clean pipe, I think, and there's the bottle."

"Thank ye, Mr. Costs.—I'll take a chair, certainly! As to your bottle, I've a moral objection to that!—it's nearly empty! Returns may, as you say, be good legal smoking, but I think a 'bird's-eye' view may be best of such a long clay as that—especially in a dark night," casting a look at the ominous stranger.

"Umph!—I understand. Mr. Kickup, allow me to introduce to you, a faithful, though a humble, friend of mine, excellent Jack Alibi. Jack, this is Mr. Kickup, a clever gentleman, as you may find out some day, if you ever trust him!—Ha, ha, ha!—connected with a very old and distinguished family in this county—the Periwinkles."

"Your humble servant, sir!" said excellent Jack Alibi, giving a most expressive scowl at Jonathan.

"Now, pray, excellent Jack Alibi," said Jonathan, sticking his arms a-kimbo, and foregoing for a while the filling of his pipe, "pray, excellent Jack Alibi! who and what are you? You look more like a cut-throat than a cow-doctor, a precious deal!—whence comes your preferment, excellent Jack Alibi?"

"Didn't I tell ye he was a rum un, Jack?" interposed Costs.

"I don't understand your honour!—What d'ye mean, sir?" replied Alibi, looking by no means either pleased or satisfied with Jonathan's exceeding candour.

"What do I mean!" replied Jonathan, quite unabashed, and returning to the charge; "I begin to suspect you're not a very moral character. You must know more of Calais sands than the Church of England, by the cut of you! When I ask a man how he comes by his preferment, it's a polite way I've got of inquiring how he gets his living."

"Why, to be sure, sir, I get my living in any honest way that I can."

"Aye, aye; and I suppose any way's honest to you. Costs, my boy, I wish you'd ask for spirits; this gin of yours is three parts water."

"Come, come, Mr. Jonathan, you mustn't be too witty on your neighbours. Our friend Jack, there, possesses an honesty much greater than either yours or mine, only unfortunately the world doesn't quite think so. His main trade, d'ye see, is, helping folks to judge of the excise regulations, by bringing over to England occasionally a little Geneva and brandy, which has never passed through their hands; and besides that, you understand me, Mr. Jonathan, he makes one of the best witnesses in a difficult case that can well be—no cross-examination ever bothered him—some fifteen or sixteen causes of mine he's happened to be witness to—accidentally, of course—in one way or another, in different parts of the country, and I never saw him bogle at it yet. However, let's push about the bottle, and be merry. If you want a keg of spirit, overproof, Jack Alibi's the lad for you. Hah! here comes the bar-maid with a fresh bottle!"

"Never mind the bottle, sir; we came to talk of business—not to drink," said Jonathan, filling as he spoke—unconsciously, of course—two wine glasses with the fresh spirit, and mixing a most potent joram; "if business is to be done, let us to it; drinking interferes with the free exercise of intellect. Besides, I've a dislike, to say the truth, gentlemen, to its introduction before the more absorbing matter. It looks, d'ye see, as if something were about to be proposed to a man, which it was not wanted his whole mind should see—a sort of one-sided subject, and that side not your own but your entertainer's. Gentlemen, your health," and down went the joram at a single draught. "I was about to say, gentlemen, I object to this on principle. It is as bad in its way, as that gin and water.—Excuse me, Mr. Costs, but if I may make myself at home, I'll ring for a glass of weak brandy and water, just to take the taste out of my mouth."

"Oh! certainly, but you needn't ring; here's some of Jack Alibi's in the closet behind me. Let's have your opinion of it."

"Well, well, a thimble-full, or so.—Is this it? Aye, that looks somewhat likely," holding it up to the light.—To give a good opinion requires a drop neat."—Down went a glassful.—"Jack Alibi, if this is your importing, I fear my first impressions may have wronged your high moral character."

"Yes; I think you must admit, Jonathan, that'll do."

"Not quite so hastily, Mr. Costs. Brandy's like a well-dressed woman—very charming when neat; but show me the lady in her dishabille Mr. Costs, before I swear to her perfections. Hand me the cold water, Jack Alibi, and let's see how your *eau de vie* dilutes." Another mixture, if possible more potent than the first, here took place, and Jack, who witnessed with growing wonder its disappearance down the tartarus of Jonathan's throat, began to edge off his chair, so as to leave a free passage to the floor. Jonathan, however, slowly refilling his tumbler, remarked, "That's a promising young brandy, is that. But, as I said before, I must set my face against any kind of drinking till business is over. For what is it, Mr. Costs, you've done me the honour to ask my attendance here this evening?"

"Oh!—ah!—yes!—to be sure! Why, the fact is, Jack Alibi, there, says—that is—I believe—I don't know if I've misunderstood him—but I think I'm right—Alibi says he knows some little matters which, if I might suggest his being called as a witness in this unfortunate affair of Mr. Paul Periwinkle, would clearly prove that he can't be the murderer of his cousin, though matters do look so dead against him.—Isn't that so, Jack?"

"Yes, sir," growled Alibi, "just so."

"Just so; and that, in fact, on the night in question, Alibi saw him, and was with him, during the best part of the time; and that, in fact, it was morally impossible he could have committed the murder.—Isn't that so, Jack?"

"Just so, sir."

"And that, indeed, he can account for all the suspicious circum-

stances that have thrown so much doubt on the matter.—Isn't that so, Jack?"

"Just so, sir."

"Exactly; and that the real truth of the story is this—that Mr. Paul had some little kind of a flirtation with the daughter of one of Jack's men, and used to make a pretence of coming out at nights to see a cargo run, to have a chaff with her, and that, on the night in question, Jack, here, ran a cargo, and Mr. Paul went down to see, and was in truth on the beach when it was run, and then went home and had a crack and a glass with them, when two of their crew fell out, and must have a slash at one another with their cutlasses, and Mr. Paul, in endeavouring to separate them—"

"Now, before you go any farther, Mr. Costs," interposed Jonathan, "tell me what part it is you wish me to take in this true history?"

"Why, of course, as a follower of the family, you'll feel it your duty to mention these facts to Sir Job; because, as Alibi there would subject himself to a prosecution for smuggling, of course Sir Job would indemnify his family and friends in another way; and no doubt a feeling of delicacy on this score has made Paul so obstinate in giving no explanation of the matter.—Isn't that so, Jack?"

"Just so, sir."

"To be sure;—but then, anything's better than seeing a young gentleman of good family hung on false grounds."

"Exactly so, that's just my opinion, Mr. Costs; and being of that opinion, I shall have no hand in bringing into a court of justice any such evidence as that you're mentioning. Not that I pretend to doubt a single fact being true; but unfortunately it doesn't look like truth, and as it's been kept back so long, it must now be kept back altogether. I've a very high idea of Jack Alibi's disinterested friendship, which is only to be excelled by your own, Mr. Costs; because, after all, he was to be indemnified, which, of course, you were not. But in the first place, you would not find a counsel on the circuit to call a witness to speak to such singular facts; and next, if you could persuade Mr. Paul to call Alibi himself, that alone would suffice not only to hang one man, but fifty. No, if a verdict should unfortunately go against us, which, I must say, under all circumstances, I greatly fear, in such case, excellent Jack may be useful in another way; but I'll have no hand in placing him in the witness-box. So now, having settled all of business that I mean to discuss to-night, I've no objection to a moderate glass.—Avast, there, Costs—you've drowned the miller's thumb!"

## CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

### WHICH CLEARLY PROVES THAT THERE IS SUCH A MAN IN THE WORLD AS ONE "MR. WRYNECKER."

It has been a remark often made, and always truly, that if the adventures of a day were duly chronicled, few matters could be more diverting or more varied. In this case, but a very small portion of the day is at our disposal to give, but this portion has not yet run to a close. At the hotel to which Taxed-Costs went—for being of a fat habit, he utterly protested against much self-denial in personal matters. At the hotel in question, therefore, which was among the first in the city, a grand ball was this night given. In addition to this public amusement, there were also some little private divertisements not mentioned in the general bill. They were not, however, without their instruction to the public, and thus they arose.

Among the numerous hosts of solicitors bis-annually drawn to this city to attend the assizes, was Mr. Wrynecker.

"Wrynecker!" exclaimed Charles, when one day he got a brief, bearing that respectable attorney's endorsement; "who the devil is so impertinent as to send me fictitious names. There *cannot* be such a man!"

But there was such a man, though, for all that; and a man, too, every way worthy of his name. We'll describe him. Mr. Wrynecker was going to bed, and he stood before his bed-room fire. His round bullet-head was covered with a low-crowned, broad-brimmed white hat. He always wore a white hat, the under part of the brim being dyed green. This was to preserve his eyes—Mr. Wrynecker was always most particular about his eyes. His coat was of a green hue also, but of a darker tint—the regular bottle hue. It had an ample cut behind—and very necessary was the amplitude—a square-tailed, capacious, silver-buttoned, large-pocketed, country gentleman's coat; and for fear there should be any mistakes as to who or what was the wearer, it was always crammed with briefs and papers, the ends of the former sticking out an inch or so, and most legibly inscribed each and all, "Wrynecker!" A name at once so singular and conspicious, was of course read easily, even upside down, as in the present case. Few folks, therefore, were better known in the place than Wrynecker. Beneath the old gentleman's coat always appeared a yellow waistcoat, and an ample display of cambric frill, the neatness and cleanliness of both of which had, during a series of years, impressed upon the public mind a very high opinion of the Wrynecker laundress. Mistress Wrynecker, as the Scotch say, there was none. Wrynecker had of course been crossed in love; and though forty odd years ago, he said he had not yet *quite* got over it. The ladies, in truth, all wished he had, for forty thousand reasons, which old Wrynecker had taken the

liberty to put out to mortgage, at five per cent. So that the female friends of Wrynecker did, what many old bachelors would be glad to see them do—grow more and more reasonable every year. And this naturally brings us to the description of Mr. Wrynecker's small-clothes. They fitted under the waistcoat with admirable precision, having a graceful rotundity of outline, were of the colour called buff, and terminated in a pair of brown leather leggins—the finality principle of which, Lord John Russell, consisted of a pair of shoes. Like the base of your Reform Bill, they were ten-pounders, and so your lordship would find out, if you had to walk to Downing-street every day in them. At a subsequent period, they brought poor Wrynecker, who was an outrageous radical, under the suspicion of the privy council, that august body having directed on the worthy attorney a vigilant share of their secret espionage, on the credible rumour that Wrynecker had been in treaty with Napoleon to sell them as part of his invading flotilla—the Wrynecker *shoes*. The alarms of government were said, however, to have been allayed, on hearing that Andreossi, who came down incog. as engineer-ambassador, to survey the same, drew up a report to the First Consul that they were rather fitted for canal navigation than prudent to venture in on the English channel. On this, Wrynecker, it is confidently affirmed, was only called on to give bail, and allowed to wear his shoes in quiet. But still the public persecuted him, as he said, for his opinions; and as he openly affirmed he would narrow his understanding for no man, he had been known, from time immemorial, to pass by the name of "Old Squaretoes." But though we have found it impossible, in justice to our united characters—his and ours—to suppress the history of his shoes, we are equally unable to pass by the biography of his breeches. They were no ordinary inexpressibles—don't suppose it, reader! We called them buff—it's a good expansive colour, and takes in many shades. But they had once been white, for they were buckskin. It was a customary thing among Wrynecker's friends, to ask as often as they conveniently could—for of course Wrynecker was a testy fellow—however, once a day, on an average, they asked him what sort of unmentionables he had on. His answers, when he gave any other than a frown, were various—"Find out—not yours—what d'ye think!" and many other not quite so polite replies. But when some fit of particular complacency seized him, he would wink, smile, stretch out the well-proportioned limb, give it a slap that might have answered a minor theatre for summer thunder, and exclaim—

"Ah, my boy! those *are* a pair of tights for you, and no mistake! Why, what d'ye think?—I gave Black Sam, the famous prize-fighter, three times the price for them that they cost when new!—Sam had worn 'em ten years, and I've worn 'em sixteen more; and please God I live as long, will for sixteen to the back of that."

"But, Mr. Wrynecker, don't they—excuse me, you know—but don't they look a little soiled?—Wouldn't they be the better, perhaps, for being washed?"

"Washed!—washed!—whew!—spoil 'em!—ruin 'em!—Wouldn't have them washed for a hundred pounds!—Pretty fellow you are!—Much you know about breeches!—Ah! Black Sam's the boy!—Now, there's a clever fellow for ye!—A regular out-and-out man of intellect!—Why, would you believe it! I've known him five-and-twenty years, come Lady-day next, and never since the first month of our friendship, have I had the trouble of being measured for a single article of dress!—Hats, coats, waistcoats, leggins—anything!—Whenever I want a new fit-out, I just write a line to Black Sam to go and get measured by the tip-top tailor of Bond-street—down comes the toggery—fits to a hair. Now, here's a coat—this is one of his!—Did ye ever see a fit like this before?" and round old "Squaretoes" would back upon his listener for a full view.

"Never, sir, except the fit behind," replied Jonathan Kickup to him, on their first acquaintance; for Jonathan, with his usual impudence, had taken the first opportunity of drawing him out on the subject.

"D——me, my boy," said old Squaretoes, quite delighted, "give us your hand. I've a high opinion of your candour and integrity."

Well, then, old Squaretoes stood in his bed-room on the night in question, before the fire, dressed and habited as aforesaid; but stern and ireful was his look. Little wonder, either, that it was so. His right hand was plunged deep into his capacious dexter pouch; his left rested, as was ofttimes usual with him, on the ivory cross handle of his stout walking-stick.—But why that fearful grin upon his chops? Why did his nose look "fiery-red," almost as much so as the ignited weed within the enormous long Dutch pipe that projected its yard of unsullied clay from a fissure between his front teeth? We freely admit that these are vital questions, and solemnly demand an answer. Why then, the fact was, that old Squaretoes, being on all hands admitted to be what is usually termed "a character," everybody fancied a right to take liberties with him—a supposed right which we must in justice say was very freely exercised. All sorts of tricks and pranks were regularly fired upon him at every assize town throughout the circuit, where he had business, by his professional brethren, the young solicitors and attornies; and though these not unfrequently found the joke rebound against themselves, they persisted in their efforts to make him a travelling martyr. At this city in especial there was a dead set made. First because old Squaretoes always took care to secure the best bedroom, sitting-room, and other accommodations, long before hand; and secondly, because the attendance of his tormentors was here larger than on any other point; and thirdly, because among them always came a clever young mischief-lover, Esauson by name—more commonly distinguished as the son of Esau—who always planned the troubles of his friend, but took excessive good care that others should execute his plans. On the present occasion, they had directed against Mr. Wrynecker, ever since his arrival the day before, a most unceasing artillery of "sells," of large and small calibre,

during the hours of light; and when he retired to rest, perpetually knocked him up to say, "The coach is starting, sir."

"D—— the coach and you too, sir;—what have I to do with the coach?" was a reply too indistinct for their concern as to his punctuality. They all in turn made the mistake of taking his room for their own; sent up, on one pretext or another, boots, ostler, and a variety of minor demons, nor even allowed the old radical to get what he emphatically termed "a refreshing slumber," till four of the clock.

The first day of assizes—being able to indulge a few extra hours—this did not signify. But his wrath was great, and he publicly announced, with many imprecations, his intention of making an example of the next of the offenders. In proportion, however, as these found out one "sore" more sensitive than the rest, they directed all their attacks upon it. The son of Esau more especially, seeing how vindictive old Squaretoes was getting, determined to effect a double purpose, not only of carrying his original object of attack, but putting forward some one to do it against whom he would by no means be sorry to see all the retaliation of Mr. Wrynecker exerted. The happy youth on whom the son of Esau pitched for this kind distinction, was Taxed-Costs. Him they found little difficulty in persuading not only of the great delight of further persecuting old Squaretoes, but also of the great facility and safety which attended the act. The obese Costs quite agreed in this view of the case, and as his bedroom, he said, was only down one passage on the same floor with Wrynecker, he confessed it would add greatly to his comfort to demolish that of Squaretoes, and knocking him up on one pretence or another every half hour till four o'clock—beginning from such a time as the brother of Jacob should be able to ascertain that the worthy Wrynecker had fallen into his first nap. Now Taxed-Costs, who had been busy all day with his brother, knew not one word of the fearful threats which old Squaretoes had been making; while the latter had greatly the advantage of him, in shrewdly suspecting that some annoyance was in preparation—and he prepared accordingly, by bringing to bed his heavy hunting horsewhip. For a long time he, as before described, stood smoking before the fire, and expecting the first summons; but as it was past one, and no disturber was heard, he began to congratulate himself on the good effect produced by his published resentment; but that he might be all ready to receive the enemy, he laid his whip on the pillow, undressed, put out "The Shoes" for Mr. Boots, left his door unlocked, with a clear passage to the bed, and without extinguishing the light, retired to rest. Now, when a body of that size which belonged to Mr. Wrynecker comes suddenly down upon a bed, of however soft materials, it has a very natural tendency to give a distinct groan, like a sensible animal as it is. For this signal the son of Esau and his party were waiting in the room below, and they no sooner heard it in the midst of their cups, than they proceeded to drink to "The *bonn reposs* of old Squaretoes," and in twenty minutes sent up a message to the room of Taxed-Costs, who, being

very tired, had insisted on not only going to bed, but going to sleep himself.

Nothing but threats of treble vengeance from the whole gang ever got him out to do his duty, and even then he internally vowed that this should be both the first and last time of asking—utterly abjuring the every half hour system, and fully resolved to lock his own door when he returned, and unclose it again that night for no one. However, up he got, slipped on a loose spencer and a pair of slippers, and away he went, half asleep, to the door of old Squaretoes. As a matter of course, the first thing he did was to stumble over "The Shoes," and scarcely had he struck one blow with his knuckles on the Wrynecker panels, than open flew the portal, and down came a most vigorous lash of the Squaretoes horsewhip upon Taxed-Cost's fat shoulder.

Away flew Costs, heedless whither—now only for the first time "wide awake," and as instantly after him rushed Wrynecker.

Now, we hope it is understood by our readers that the passage from old Squaretoes' bedroom had a wrong as well as a right turning. This being known, it is needless for us to add, that Taxed-Costs took the wrong one.—Away he went, at the full top of his speed, his heavy feet sounding most awfully among the long walls and confined turnings. As to his own room, his flight seemed scarcely to allow of his considering anything in particular relating to it; and certainly by his course he seemed to think that if he dashed right a-head, nothing could keep him from getting into it.

As yet he had only received the first blow, but that still smacked so warmly on his shoulder, that he entertained not the remotest wish of testing the strength of a second from the same hand. Still they sounded thick and three-fold behind him, and still he heard, with an admixture of delight and dread, that the surrounding walls received the best portion of them. With every blow bestowed upon the senseless plaster, he distinguished, or thought he could distinguish, quite as fearful, the gradual approaching vicinity of their violence, as if the pursuer gained rapidly on the pursued. Again he redoubled his exertions, and again he seemed to leave the sounding lash behind, for what tended in no slight degree to increase his wonder, was the mute malignity with which old Squaretoes pursued him. Not a word, not a single expression, good, bad, or indifferent, could he be heard to utter —nothing but his involuntary puffing, and his most voluntary lashing, escaped him. At last, a sudden turning in the passage brought Costs in front of its termination—a closed door. He thought it looked rather large, but that would allow him to escape through it so much the quicker. It was made of mahogany, too; and his own, if he remembered rightly, was of wainscot colour. But this was no time for the nice consideration of an artist. It did also faintly glimmer on his sensorium, that mingled and unusual sounds were audible within. But the blows behind him struck so much harder, that this was no time to stand upon the delicate impressions of a musician. The Tom cat had got in—or—or—but no matter. Not an instant did he hesitate.

Dashing at the door with the whole velocity at which he was then travelling, away it flew open. A blaze of light burst upon him. Powers of darkness! what did he see? A momentary glance at the spectacle seemed to occupy involuntarily his mental vision. A rapid turn of the head "over his left" shoulder followed. There, panting round the corner came the grim and remorseless Squaretoes, whip in hand, his red-hot face and glaring eyes like some vengeful whipper-in of the infernal regions, declared either retreat or inaction impossible, and, ill-accoutred as he was, away he dashed once more.

How shall the muse her further tale relate? Taxed, as poor Costs might often have been hitherto, never, never was he *so* taxed before! On what adventurous region had he rushed? Alas! one for which, of all others, he was least suited. In short, nothing less than a crowded suite of ball-rooms, for these being in the hotel, with a private door, opening from one of the card-rooms; this was the unlucky opening which he had mistaken for his own chamber, and before he knew where he was, he stood in the midst of some three-and-forty dowagers, with no alternative but either to rush into their arms, or fall into those of the infuriated Wrynecker. The choice he made is already known to us. The dowagers might possess fans, but what were these to a stout horsewhip. Away he flew, threading the whole group, and breaking the blockade which they had formed around both dancers and card players, in the most gallant manner. Then arose from floor to ceiling the terrific shriek of ladies, in such an agony of perplexity as scarcely to know whether they should most laugh or shriek—then the air was darkened with a show of hands which, though outspread, yet most ineffectually protected their own eyes from the blasting sight—then many heads were turned, which had long since escaped the charge of every giddiness—then did the hearty and unequivocal roar of sundry male voices add a most cheering bass to the universal chorus, which, with the various cries of "What's the matter?"—"Who the devil!"—"What's this?"—"Mason, you've trumped my trick!"—"Sir, will you draw your card?"—"May I ask you to take down your score?" altogether completed a babel of sounds to which nothing could add, but the heavy stamping of poor Costs' feet, as he darted panting among the crowd, who all, as if touched by some electric wand, made way before this fiery comet. While yet, however, every eye was fixed upon him, a still heavier charge was heard, and in rushed old Squaretoes, fiery-hot with haste, cutting away with his whip, puffing like a porpoise, and utterly disregardful of the scene around him so that he came up with his prey; but this was no easy matter. Costs once put to the dodge, displayed infinitely more activity than any one could have been led to suppose possible, till having dodged in rapid circlets, hither and thither, with Wrynecker close at his heels—old Mrs. Pigou, who had buried three husbands, and was looking out for a fourth, got upset by him in a crack, while Squaretoes, making no more of her than an old rat, strided across her back, and Costs just contrived to reach another door as the music stopped. Up came old Squaretoes before his prey could contrive to unlock it, and, in

the midst of the comparative pause made by the cessation of the band, were heard the heavy lashes of the whip—the cries of Costs—and the combined uproar of the dancers. At last away went the door, out shot Costs, and swiftly impelled after him, away vanished the substantial form of Wrynecker into utter darkness—a shriek and heavy fall were heard, as both hound and hare were precipitated down a very steep staircase, and then every other sound was drowned amidst the cries and moans of forty-four hysterics, and twenty-three fainting fits.

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## CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

### THE PRESSGANG—ITS WORKING—ITS MERCIES—AND DELIGHTS.

"HAVE these pressed men made their appearance yet, Mr. Mainstay?" inquired Captain Fidget of the officer of the morning-watch, on board the king's frigate, Nero; a day or two after the first opening of our tale.

"No, sir," replied the lieutenant, touching his hat. "I see our boat is still lying alongside the Relentless."

"Slow—very slow—cursed slow people these Guardoes. As soon as you see our boat shove off with the men, pipe 'all hands up anchor.'" Then, muttering to himself, "We might be half way to Jamaica by this time, and making prize-money." Then diving below once more to his cabin, he left Mr. Mainstay, to his great delight, all the pleasures of solitude, and the easy task of watching the departure of the Nero's boat from alongside the Relentless seventy-four, moored as guardship in the Downs. This was just such a task as Mainstay liked—with a little assistance. The morning was dark, cold, and foggy, in the middle of winter, and somewhat about six of the clock. Telling the quarter-master and mate of the watch to keep a sharp look-out in the same direction, he carefully laid his glass across the hammock-nettings, and leaning both arms on the hammock-rail, put his eye carefully to the small end of the telescope, and went fast asleep.

This proceeding his mate of the watch noted most carefully, much more so than he did any proceedings on board the Relentless, and then strictly cautioning the quarter-master to be most vigilant, he followed the lieutenant's example. As for the old quarter-master, he kept awake, for the simple reason of being unable to help himself, for quarter-masters form a distinct class in the natural history of man, and seem never to require that their leathern lids should close.

At last, the desired moment arrived. A large pinnace pushed off from the side of the seventy-four, and rowed, with slow and measured cadence of their oars towards the frigate. At the stern sat something that was intended for a midshipman, and beside him four marines, with loaded muskets, watched that no attempt at escape was made by

those who were hastening to "defend their native land," under the pleasant auspices, and generous sympathies of THE PRESSGANG. After a slow pull against the tide, they reached the frigate. Just as the ship's anchor was at her bows, the pinnace arrived alongside; for, in accordance with Captain Fidget's order, the pipe "hands up anchor" had been given, and himself called to command at the operation.

"Let that boat be veered astern till the ship is fairly under weigh," said Captain Fidget to the first lieutenant; and accordingly a rope's-end being flung to the bowmen, and passed under one of the thawts, the pinnace was towed at the stern, till the frigate's topsails, jib, and driver being set, she was fairly on her way down channel, and the watch called.

But though one half the crew were thus set free from the duty of working the ship, they did not attempt to go below. That curiosity which we all possess, to inspect either the unfortunate who are plunged beneath, or those who are placed beyond us, induced all hands to loiter still on deck, to view the twenty new pressed men, who had that morning been drafted from the guard, to fill up their scanty complement for foreign service. The pinnace at length was slowly hauled alongside to leeward, and then, while the marines with their charged fire-arms kept strict watch, the victims of the pressgang slowly ascended the ship's side. Many of them had never mounted but one before—others were still unable to ascend the frigate—some, to whom the method was but too well known, rose with many a bitter curse upon their lips —while one resolutely flung himself down in the bottom of the boat, and swore that no persuasion should ever induce him to enter such a prison! Vain resistance! the end of a rope was fastened round the prostrate body, and in a few seconds it was hauled up upon the quarter-deck, with as much distinction, respect, and feeling, as the quarter of a slaughtered bullock would have been.

The melancholy row stood ranged at length. A sentry posted at the gangway forbade all retreat to the boat. The ship was hove to—the tackles rigged aloft—the pinnace hoisted in-board and stowed away—the last communication with the shore they loved, cut off—the land on which they had been born, the country that still held their wives, their children, or those who, possessing the relationship of neither, were as dear as both—that land, the boasted home of freedom —the vaunted refuge from every tyranny and oppression, was in sight, almost within grasp—the very air they breathed was redolent of its odours, and yet now they beheld themselves torn from everything they held most dear, and borne away, they knew not whither, by the very act of that government—the sufference of that very society, which, with equal falsehood and robbery, had taxed them for yielding "protection," and insulted them with the mockery of mutual assistance. Oh! iniquitous anomaly! most impudent illusion! The savage who ranges wild on the shores of New Zealand, and feeds on the half-roasted flesh of the prisoner whom the strength of his arm has taken, possesses nobler laws, and a more generous society.

But there they stood—broken-hearted and desolate—the twenty new pressed men—the victims of despair and the most treacherous cruelty—many of them now for the first time upon the sea, and all on their road to the most unhealthy region in the world—where the breath of the pestilence was to aid the sword of the enemy and the sorrows of their own bosoms, in outstripping the pangs of hell, and hastening those of death! Could the hearts of those twenty have been mercifully laid open, and mental vision have been temporarily endowed with material power, what an anatomy of the passions would have been seen! All the most touching relations of life violated—all the sweetest and the tenderest ties rudely torn asunder—all that the mind can image and the heart forbode of sorrow and distress embodied with all the magic quickness of a dream and the sternness of reality.

The crew stood grouped at a little distance on the lee gangway, watching with a mute and melancholy interest the expression on each countenance, as the captain, the first lieutenant, and the clerk, went round taking down the names, and allotting their various stations to all in the duties of the ship.

Some, pale and deathlike, with sickness, confinement, and mental agony, were unable to render any answers at all to the queries addressed to them. Others, who had been at sea before, replied in a sullen dogged tone, that seemed to fear the authority against which it well knew the futility of kicking; while in the flashing blood-shot fiery eye, the swollen and compressed lip, might be read the deep but silent vow of future vengeance.

Many implored most bitterly to be let go, alleging their utter uselessness as sailors; but to these no answers were returned but the vain command of silence. Others again raved and protested at the atrocious outrage upon their liberty, and told the circumstances of suspense and difficulty in which their forced absence must have left their families; while one, named Henley, a tall, fine, manly fellow, seemingly not more than four and-twenty, threw himself on his knees, embraced the captain's feet, and with the rude but melting eloquence of agonized feeling, implored to be let go. He had been seized, he said, while on the road to fetch the doctor to his young wife, in labour with her first child. Four nights had passed since he was dragged on board the Relentless, and whether mother or child, or one or both, or neither, lived or died, he knew no more than the deck on which he knelt. The distraction of his mind—the intensity of his love—the madness of his separation—all were painted with an unstudied strength—that affected every hearer. Why should he be kept? Could he be useful to them who had never before ventured so far even in an open boat—whose mind was so maddened by suspense that he knew not scarcely whether he dreamed or lived?—What had he done?—Why should he and all belonging to him meet a fate more relentless than was shown to the murderer at the gallows?—To serve his country!—where—how—to what purpose could he serve his country better than by re-

maining on shore supporting the wife that he loved, the child that depended on him—the sister he protected, and the mother that bore him, by the industry of his hands? All these must come to want and misery if he were taken from them. Perhaps even now their agony was exceeding his. The very life of two might depend on his succouring them then. He was a cabinet-maker, and not a sailor. Why then should he be kept? It would be useless cruelty. He could not and he would not live to serve a country that could use him so.

But it was all in vain. Not a muscle of Captain Fidget's face moved in answer to the appeal made to him, and without even desiring the poor wretch to rise from his feet, which he still embraced, he turned slightly to his first lieutenant—

"Mr. Toggle, as this man says he is a cabinet maker, put him into the carpenter's crew—you'll find him very useful. I shall stand a chance, at last, of getting a good sideboard made."

The poor expectant wretch, with protruding eyes, lips tremulously quivering, and muscles stretched to the last degree of tension, was vainly hoping for the sentence that was to set him free. The efforts made in pleading his unhappy cause, had for a moment caused a hectic colour to chase away the deadly pallor that before sat on his sunk cheeks; the light glistening on the half-dried tears, for a second appeared almost as bright as his fevered and restless eye: but when he heard this sentence, the last effort of life seemed over—every motive for further exertion gone. His eyes closed—his hands relaxed their clasp—his head sunk on his bosom—and then rolled down upon the deck, when, as from a mass of pliant clay, Captain Fidget extricated his feet, and passed on to the last of the pressed men, carelessly adding—

"Take care of him till this little matter's over. Well, sir," addressing the last man, "what's your name?"

The party addressed paused for some minutes, as if considering what to say, and then replied, "John Prestone."

"Oh!" grunted Fidget in reply, looking at the man from head to foot.

The object of his scrutiny seemed even younger than the unhappy cabinet-maker, and though not so tall, was of that compact frame which generally results as one of the very few benefits that accompany the hardships and privations of a sea life. His shoulders were broad and muscular, without being fat; while his waist and hips were small as his limbs were large. He wore nothing but a fine linen shirt, and a pair of black cloth trowsers, also of a fine texture. He was covered with dirt and blood; his left arm was slung in a black neck-handkerchief; and his face, though pale and unwashed like the rest of his fellow-prisoners, was eminently handsome.

"I say, young man," continued the captain, after a minute scrutiny, "you've been to sea before, if I'm not mistaken."

"Yes, sir, I have."

"What ship?"

"In the merchant service, sir."

"Are you sure you've never been in the king's navy before, sir?"

"Certain."

"What were you in the merchant service?"

"First mate, sir, to the Mary-Anne, West Indian trader."

"Where are your papers?"

"Lost, sir, unfortunately. If I had not lost my papers, I should have claimed exemption from the Pressgang on board the Relentless."

"Well, well, it's no use asking any awkward questions; you look like a fellow who can be smart if he likes. If you choose *yes*, you'll get on; and if you choose *no*, you'll get flogged, so you may take whichever choice pleases you best. Mr. Foggle, there is a vacant berth as second captain of the foretop, if this is a smart hand you may give it him."

As Fidget said this, he turned round to depart to his cabin.

"Stay, sir!—stay, I implore you!" cried the miserable Henley, who, having come to himself, sprang forward to make one last effort. "Do not detain me, I implore you, for the love of God!—Useful to you!—I am a madman while I remain here!—I could not work if I would!—Let me but return to the shore, and instead of one piece of furniture, I will send you fifty!—I will work my hands off my arms for you! and send you all you want, however distant the ship may be! —You shake your head!—Well, if you cannot give me up, only let me go to see my wife and child!—Only let me know that they are well!—Only let me tell them where I am!—See, sir, the ship is passing the very village where they live!—where I was so cruelly seized! —only let me do this!—It will not keep you a single hour! and I will come back cheerfully and submit to my fate!"

"Mr. Toggle, let that fellow be taken below," was the captain's only notice.

Toggle gave a signal to three of the afterguard—they advanced—laid their hands on Henley's collar—and were dragging him as gently as they could off the quarter-deck along the gangway. The wretched being fixed his wild and streaming eyes for a few seconds on the little village, whose distant spire was seen to rise above the waves that washed the coast of Kent. There, where all he loved was, or had lately been!—there, where his anguish too truly painted all the misery his forced absence was creating!—then, while the words nearly choked him in their utterance, he said to his reluctant conductors—

"Let me go alone!—I promise I will give you no more trouble!"

Too well he fulfilled his words, for scarcely had they relaxed their hold, when, with a sudden spring, he dashed through the entering-port, opposite to which he had arrived, and before they could prevent the act, the troubled sea flowed over all his sorrows!

"Man overboard!—Man overboard!" was the instantaneous cry.

"Who is it?" said Captain Fidget, without turning round.

"Henley, sir, that young pressed man," replied Toggle.

"D—— obstinate fool!" muttered Fidget, still maintaining his walk.

"I don't see him, sir. Hadn't we better lower a boat, Captain Fidget?"

"No!" cried Fidget, in a harsh tone, walking on as before, while Toggle joined for a second the gazers astern. "It'll mend his manners to let him have a swim."

"There he is!—there he rises!" cried several of the junior officers aloud.

"I don't think he *can* swim, sir," cried Toggle, running back to Fidget. "Hadn't we better lower the boat without more delay?"

"Certainly not."

"Oh, very well, sir! Then we may say good-bye to your sideboard."

"What is it you're talking about?—*a man overboard?*—Good God, sir! why didn't you make yourself understood? Quick, sir; why the devil don't you heave the main-topsail aback, and order the larboard quarter-boat to be lowered down?—What are you dreaming of?—Why didn't you explain?"

Late as these orders came, no time was lost in carrying them into effect. Six active volunteers leaped into the boat, and the best part of an hour was passed in endeavouring to rescue Henley from the peril he had so precipitately preferred to the loss of his liberty—but all in vain. By the time the crew got out their oars, not the slightest trace could be found, even of any particle of his dress, much less of the wearer; and after a long and dispiriting pull, the boat's crew returned to that life which they had seen a fellow-creature perish rather than endure! while the outrage of the law had driven, as the last resort for refuge, to the cold bosom of the sea, the husband—the parent—the brother—and the son.

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## CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH,

### WHICH SHOWS WHAT MAY BE DONE BY SOME FOLKS' NOTIONS OF "FIRMNESS OF MIND."

The boat having been hoisted up at the quarter-davits, from which it had been lowered, Captain Fidget very kindly paused in his walk, and beckoned to the first lieutenant.

"Sir?" said that officer, coming up to his superior, and lifting his cap.

"Tell the surgeon to take a little blood from that man Henley, as soon after he comes-to as possible."

"I am sorry to say, sir," replied the first lieutenant, shaking his head very gravely, "that the surgeon will have no opportunity of carrying your orders into execution, for we've not been able to find him."

"Oh! not able to find him, eh? Very well. Now, sir, attend to me, for this is a matter of importance, and I will brook no paltering on it—I've told you three times in the last two days, that I insist on the brass dogvane not being moved. Half an hour since, and it was in its right position; now, sir, look at it, who has dared to do that?"

As Fidget thus disclosed the "important" matter, he pointed to a little brazen image, that had been formerly made by the armourer of the frigate, and stood on a kind of arch connecting the two binnacles in front of the steerage-wheel.

The figure represented an image of Victory, holding in her hand a perpendicular spear, from which streamed a pennon, ingeniously made of feathers. The original design of this exquisite piece of art, was to point out the direction of the wind, for the assistance of those at the conn, as the steering of a man-of-war is termed. Soon after it was made, however, the designers found, as is generally the case with all finery, that the purpose in view was far less efficiently answered by the brass effigy of Victory, placed, as she was, amidships of the quarter-deck, than the plain simple rod, with its string of feathered corks, which shifted from one quarter to the other, according to the tack on which the frigate might be standing. Still Victoria was then—as please Heaven she ever will be—too great a goddess of their idolatry to be displaced easily, on grounds however valid, so as an ornament, there she remained.

Anxious, as all good seamen are, that the ladies shall be endeared to us no less by their utility than their beauty, the lieutenants of the ship, soon after Captain Fidget assumed the command of her, had come to an understanding of working a secret telegraph by Victory's agency. They soon found out—if there be any discovery in that which never was concealed—the crotchetty nature of Captain Fidget's disposition, observing, that at some periods of the day, and during many days in the week, he stood much more upon his P's and Q's than any other letters in the alphabet.

Feeling how far more safely they could manage him, if they only knew when these fits were on the little man, they one and all determined, that whoever was officer of the watch, should leave some private signal upon deck, to say in what degree and condition of mind the gallant captain was to be found. It certainly is to be regretted, that the etiquette of the service was rather against their setting down in the log-board, after the regular fashion, this important piece of information. No one can doubt, who has ever served on board an English man-of-war, that the slightest variations in her captain's temper is of infinitely more consequence, than all the changes in the wind, bearings taken, or distances run. It would also read so well; as, for instance, "8.30 A.M. Discovered a strange sail on the lee-beam—made the private signal—signal not understood—fired a gun to leeward—shook a reef out of the fore and main-topsails, and set top-gallant-sails, jib, and driver—weather fine, with fresh breezes—Captain rather black about the bows." Such a system we say, and in the present instance more especially, would have saved a world of trouble. But

it might not be. The expression of public feeling is limited in H. M. Service, so the lieutenants aforesaid concocted a system of private telegraphing as follows:—When Fidget was in a good humour, they allowed Victory's head to remain quite straight on her fairy shoulders. When he was beginning to be a little, and only a little, queer, but so that good management, and conciliation, and talking, might win him over, then they set Victory's head with a little inclination towards the right side, for the visage being put on after the body of the figure was completed, the cranium of the goddess turned all round. In proportion, therefore, as the task of soothing him was difficult, so did the right twist in her neck become more absolute.

But if their superior's humour was of that irreclaimable sort that nothing could be done with him but to let that humour have its vent, then in that case the head was made to look the other way; as much as to say to those thus warned, that it was all *over the left* with them if they attempted to interfere with the peppery Captain Fidget till the tide of his mind went down, and the waters of his spleen began to abate. And indeed it is solemnly affirmed by Lieutenant Mainstay to this day, as the original inventor of this matchless mode of intellectual communication, that from this incident first arose the deathless expression, now so beautifully grafted on the English language, of "over the left." Be that as it may, we leave this to the next Johnson, or Walker, or Carey, or Chambers, or Sheridan, or any other groper among roots and derivations, who chooses to dedicate his mind to so illustrious a subject. This, at least, is certain, "over the left" was an expression of awful significance and magic import, on board H. M. S. Nero, as far back as the beginning of the first revolutionary war.

Fidget was of an inquiring mind; "Nothing," he said, "escaped him," and we humbly take it, that the percolator of our reader's coffee-pot would with equal justice make the same remark to the grounds, after the coffee had all run through.

The percolating class of minds is by no means an uncommon or trivial one in this world; and I think, if we watch Captain Fidget's proceedings for a short time, we shall become fully convinced of his title to be considered as first-rate among them. Captain Fidget had commanded the Nero now some two months. She had come home from the East Indies, after nine years' hard service. The constitution *of the ship* had been thoroughly repaired in dock, and in consideration to his high rank and long services, the same great privilege had been allowed her former captain, who, having procured during his service considerable prize-money and an enlarged liver, was allowed to retire into the bosom of his family—a comprehensive phrase that took in the whole range of himself and his—valet; the latter, divested of this high-sounding title, was plain Jack Jibstay. He had a huge pair of brawny shoulders, to be sure, but we utterly defy him to have carried—for any number of yards worth mentioning—even under the sanction of an admiralty order, the bulky form of Captain Curry in his vest; so much reason, indeed, have we in this our ap-

prehension, that the chaplain of the flagship had, he said, considerable doubts as to Curry's future welfare; not seeing clearly how he could be carried even in Abraham's bosom, let alone anybody else's.

But this might have been merely a chaplain's concern for his client. Curry departed—Fidget came—the crew were paid six years' pay and prize-money in one day, in order that they might fool it away in two; and the government, quite content that these forty-eight hours spent in every kind of lowering excess and ruinous debauchery, must have perfectly set up frames shattered by the burning exhaustion of the East Indies, caused them to sail on the third day for the West—a refreshing sort of change, which the First Lord of the Admiralty, who had once crossed the channel, was quite confident would do all that was necessary for them. Indeed, he was a man of very strong nerve himself, and utterly without the least fears for his own life, unless seized, perchance, with an attack of headache, or a fit of indigestion, or a twinge of gout. But even then he was satisfied with three physicians, two apothecaries, a muffled knocker, and three acres of Whitehall littered with straw, which, for a Dundas, was very moderate.

That the duty, however, might be efficiently discharged on board the frigate, and the old seamen raised in their own estimation, the day before the Nero sailed, she received a draught from all the neighbouring gaols of ninety-seven heroes, more or less celebrated for their ingenious turns of mind, and the supreme contempt of others' lives and property. While—*Finis coronat opus*—to prove the admirable manner in which English legislators work out the minutiæ, and temper down the superflous blessings of the English constitution, the ship was ordered to pause in the Downs, as we have seen, on her way from Chatham, to flavour the distillation from the prisons, with the extracts from the Pressgang; while, to give an extra value to this precious compound of exaccerbated disease, unmitigated villany, and injured discontent, Captain Fidget had been appointed to command the whole, upon incontestible claims, that set aside alike incompetency of mind, juvenility in the service, and absence of past distinction—namely, that his father's brother's cousin's dog, ran through the secretary of the admiralty's uncle's wife's back yard!

Frigates are the eyes of a fleet—England's safety depended solely on her fleets—ergo, Fidget was a most proper captain of the Nero, and the government had done their best to preserve Great Britain—*Au revoir*, Fidget had not long joined his new command, when he perceived something in the lieutenants of the Nero which struck him as unaccountable and strange. They had various exchanges of looks, without receiving the difference; while he with them had only the differences, without the exchange of looks.

Whenever he happened to be on deck during their relief of one another's watches, he remarked that the new comer, though he might touch his hat to him, Captain Fidget, and nod to his brother-officer, the lieutenant of the preceding watch, yet he invariably cast a far more potent, more intense gaze at the figure of Victory than he be-

stowed on the other two. Somehow or other, also, he always observed, that the lieutenant of the watch running to a close, invariably walked up to the brazen goddess, and did something, but for the very life of him he couldn't divine what. He looked at the confounded image—well, there she stood! with one hand supporting her eternal trumpet at her lips!—but she never blew it—at least he never heard her—and her lance and pennon in the other! But what was there in that? He had observed the same thing when he came on board at first, and for the soul of him, he could see no difference now. It couldn't be to tell the wind that his officers examined her ladyship's Corinthian metal.—Oh, no! certainly not. The dog-vane on the quarter was a much more practical tell-tale, to all intents and purposes. Moreover, in harbour, or at sea, the conduct of his officers was just the same, and they never could want so accurately to note the wind in harbour. It was perfectly inexplicable! He was dying to know what mystery lurked beneath the image of the goddess.

In his wrath he would utterly have smashed, abolished, and destroyed poor Victory; but he dared not do this, it would have defeated his own purpose. He would watch patient as Cruden over his Concordance, and investigating as Newton in his optics. Your percolating minds are always suspicious to the last degree, and that some evil and no good dwelt in the secret, he was far more fully convinced than if Euclid had only proved it by a problem.

By dint of perseverance he at last arrived at something near the truth. Watching and watching from the corners of his eyes, he saw Victory at one time wear her head, first one way, and then another. This might be very capricious in her, but ladies have the privilege—though we know they never exert it. The droll thing was, that Victory seemed to model her caprices on his own!—A gallant heart of steel would at this have been entranced—would have not only nourished the ambition of an Alexander, but sighed for his empire, and eschewed his death.

Fidget did differently—he became miserable. How he longed now to annihilate poor Victory! But shame, irresolution, and enraged vanity, all weighed with the percolator, and he trusted to some happy accident to demolish that which he had not the courage to order away himself. Then, should it ever be replaced?—Not if a prize were to fall in, each day of its recontinuance!

"What is the reason, Mr. Toggle," continued Fidget on the day in question,—"I wish to ask what is the reason, I say, that figure never can be left alone? I wish you would give directions that no one shall meddle with it. And look at those brass belaying-pins around the mainmast. I've given at least, fifty orders that they should be kept perfectly bright. To look at them, sir, one wouldn't think they'd been polished since yesterday morning. How can the ship ever hope to have a name in the service, if the duties are slurred over in this way? When *I* was a first lieutenant, Mr. Toggle, I used to think my promotion depended on the state of my ship."

Toggle, who had been in this arduous and disagreeable position fifteen years, was aware that Fidget's experience of the same office amounted to something short of fifteen days. He said, nothing, however, further, than to mutter something about the men having been very busy that morning, and sent an order by one of the midshipmen to the captain of the afterguard, to get this "important" matter attended to. Partly by way of changing the conversation, partly from the groaning of the masts, Toggle now looked aloft at the bending spars, which sent forth their complainings at every fresh puff of the breeze.

"Hadn't we better take in our top-gallant sails, Captain Fidget? —the breeze is freshening very fast."

"Certainly not, sir—certainly not. Breeze freshening! nothing of the sort—dying away you mean. Let the watch be called—make sail! Shake the remaining reefs out of the topsails."

"Aye, aye, sir," said the first lieutenant, opening his eyes, and doing as he was ordered; for this officer always had charge of the ship from the time of his being called till eight o'clock, of which it now wanted half an hour.

The remaining reefs shaken out, and the topsails hoisted again, away the old frigate staggered under the heavy pressure, her masts groaning and complaining, as each fresh puff blew off from the English shore, on which it just swept as it blew up the channel. It was, of course, with some difficulty, and only by hugging the wind as closely as possible, that the frigate could contrive to lay her course at all; but as nothing is easier than to carry too much sail, and so by heeling the ship over, defeat the very end in view—that of speed—so now the frigate, at every plunge, was burying her foremost guns under water, and making nearly as much lee-way as she did way a-head.

An experienced officer, like old Toggle, saw this at once; and after mutely watching the fact for a quarter of an hour, from the lee main-chains, and looking aloft every minute to see how the lighter spars stood this straining, he momentarily expected to see one, if not all, go over the side.

"Don't you think, sir, this press of sail, so close hauled as we are, is driving us dead to leeward?" diffidently inquired Toggle, once more going up to Fidget.

"*S-i-r!*" said the latter, with great emphasis, looking at his junior officer, and dwelling as long on the word as if he had a fee-simple of it—"Watch, make sail!—Haul on board the main-tack."

"Aye, aye, sir," again replied the discontented Toggle, shrugging his shoulders; and with a flapping like thunder, the tack of the main-course was rowsed down to the gangway, and the sheet hauled aft.

"The mainsail's set, sir," reported Toggle going up to his superior, and telling him of that he could not fail to have observed.

"Very well, sir," replied the captain, walking on as before.

If the ship was uneasy hitherto, she now pitched, groaned, and strained, with redoubled violence. The coasts of England had rapidly sunk into the dim, obscured distance, and the shores of France

had risen perceptibly in proportion, while the horizon to windward had gradually clouded over, and both sea and sky assumed that leaden tint, which often precedes sudden and violent changes in the atmosphere.

The lieutenant, who had often seen such signs, and never without some evil following them, now walked below to the main-deck, and having looked at the barometer, which hung there under charge of the sentry, hurriedly ran back to the deck; and in a degree of haste that somewhat banished the usual formality of his superior's rank, hurriedly said—

"Surely, Captain Fidget, we'd better shorten sail before it's too late. Within the last half hour, the glass has sunk six degrees."

"Set the foresail, sir," was the only reply, abruptly given.

"Sir!" exclaimed Toggle, somewhat aghast.

"Set the foresail, I say, sir."

"Aye, aye, sir," replied Toggle, and turning away so that his superior could not see his face, he raised his eye-brows in mute expression of his feelings, and proceeded to obey the order.

Fidget waited till he saw this addition made to the dangerous crowd of sail already on the ship, and then, turning down the companion—

"Mr. Toggle, I am going to my breakfast. I desire that not a stitch of sail be taken off her without my orders."

"Well, well," muttered Toggle, as he saw his superior vanish down the hatchway. "They *are* your orders, and we shall see what are to be the results of them."

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## CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH,

### WHICH IS SET TO MUCH THE SAME TUNE AS THE LAST.

When Captain Fidget, in his great magnanimity and firmness of purpose, had given the positive orders recorded in our last chapter, he seemed to take his departure for his breakfast-table, with infinitely more of appetite than most men would have been able to entertain.

Scarcely had he vanished from the deck, when the officer of the next watch came up, and took from Mainstay the charge of the ship.

"What are the orders, Mainstay," demanded the new comer.

"Orders, Llewellyn," replied Mainstay, rubbing his eyes, and yawning moderately. "No orders—only you're to keep the same course, and, if you can, keep this side uppermost. But the skipper doesn't care so much about that, provided you only keep the exact quantity of sail set, which you now see on her; and that's too much by half. So now you know all I do myself—and must just do the best you can—only look sharp. Old Boreas and Fidget are going to have a tussle, and see which can beat the other—of course the captain

will beat the others, as it's only the elements he's opposed to. All you have to do, is not to shorten sail, without telling him, on any account —look out for court-martials and cashiering, if you do! By the way, if you will call down the hatchway before the old tub goes over, I'd take it as a personal kindness."

"By *my* honour and *my* life," returned the Welshman, "if these are not proper orders!—and see if I don't keep to them. The sticks may go out of her before I disturb *my*self against *my* orders!"

As the Welshman said this with an accent on the personal pronoun which frequently distinguishes his country, he took up the deck-glass on his arm, and quietly began his patient trudge backwards and forwards—now looking at the sails aloft, now at the threatening aspect of the sky to windward, and occasionally addressing a word to the old quarter-master and steersman at the helm, of the great importance and significance of "Very well thys—no higher—steady," and other adjurations of equal moment.

Llewellyn, we have said, was a Welshman. That stated, it is needless for us to add that he was, if possible, fifty degrees more resolute than Fidget in carrying out any notion he might conceive. Not that he had the least idea that he ever was, or by any possibility ever could be construed to be—obstinate.—Oh, dear, no!—certainly not. He never would have carried his dearest project beyond the pitch of ruining himself and all connected with him, rather than give it up—certainly nothing more; and as he paced along, he kept muttering to himself—

"What an obstinate pig-headed dog this little Fidget is! As if he can't see, now, with half an eye, that there's the devil's own brew to windward. But I'll take the obstinacy out of him, I'll be bound. I'll learn the little thief what it is to trifle with the lives of his majesty's officers! To think of carrying all this crowd of canvass on the ship for no purpose at all except his own whims and fancies; and all because the first lieutenant happened to mention shortening sail first!—The devil take Toggle!—He doesn't know how to manage Fidget! If he'd only asked leave to make sail at first, Fidget would have had the craft under close-reefed top-sails in a crack! Well, well, for *my* part, I'll take very good care *I* don't call him till there's a spar or two gone, at any rate."

At this moment it so chanced that Llewellyn happened to cast his eyes to leeward, and thus suddenly became aware that the frigate had stood on towards the French coast, until it was scarcely safe to do so any further.

By Jove! though a few sticks may be blown out of her with all my heart, I've no wish that the old Nero should make a bed for herself on that low sandy shore."

Without giving himself another moment to consider the sagacious line of argument he had been before holding on the conduct of Toggle, down he rushed into the cabin, and with some impetuosity addressed the little skipper, who was quietly breaking his fast, with these words—

"Captain Fidget, its *my* opinion, sir, that we can't stand any longer on this tack—we're closing in fast on the French shore, and shoaling our water rapidly—shall I put the ship about?"

"No, sir, you will not," tartly replied Fidget. "On the contrary, sir, you will let the ship's head fall off another point from the wind. We're nothing near so close to the French shore as I intend we shall be; and we're not shoaling our water near so much as I wish. And now attend to me, sir, it's *my* opinion, that the less you give of *your* opinion to your superior officer, the higher will be *my* opinion of *your* conduct. Now, sir, return on deck, and remember, it's my positive orders, that on no account are you to allow her head to come within nine points of the wind. You may go, sir."

On hearing this address, the face of the Welshman grew like the crimson flower of the cactus—here with a streak of purple, and there with the brightest scarlet—his pale lips showing like the white petals in the centre of that gorgeous flower.

"Very well, sir—very well, sir," stammered the Cambrian, making haughtily towards the door. "*I* am not obstinately wedded to *my* opinions, sir, but I thought it *my* duty to bring the dangerous position of the ship under my captain's notice." Bang went the door, and off strutted the lieutenant to the quarter-deck, burning with thirty thousand rages.

"By Cot! was a gentleman and an officer ever so insulted! By Cot! does he think *my* experience of *my* duties can't point out what a pig might see. By Cot! *my* orders shall be obeyed, and no more. Every rag of his sails may be blown to the devil—every one of his rotten old timbers may be beaten to bits, for the French peasants to pick up as firewood, before I go to him again."

In a few seconds, however, after he had ordered the helmsman to let the frigate's head fall off a point, he looked again at the French shore, now still nearer than ever. As he did so, he could not help thinking, that however much he might wish to spite Fidget, there would be little fun in seeing his own kit utterly lost and destroyed, as it infallibly would be if a shipwreck took place, to say nothing of the disagreeable task of having to swim for one's life in a heavy sea, in the depth of a severe winter.

These combined reflections induced him to send for the master, who, in the capacity of pilot, must surely, he thought, have sufficient influence to do what he was savage to think he had not—make Fidget change his mind. Accordingly, the message went down to the master. The master came up—he looked round him—stay longer on that tack!—madness!—folly!—ruin!—shipwreck!—impossible Fidget could think of it!

"Go and try him!—the obstinate, little, blind, bigotted, old devil!—go and try him, that's all, master!"

The master shook his head very knowingly, as much as to say it was utterly impossible the captain could disregard *his* admonitions; and accordingly down he went, while Llewellyn remained pacing the deck, fretting and fuming, and not knowing how most to vent his rage; so,

for fear he should either choke or burst, he contrived in that short interval to mast-head the mate of his watch—to send one of the youngsters to the spritsail-yardarm—and threaten the rest with so favourable a report to the captain, as should lead to the flogging of the whole of them.

While thus amiably engaged in following up that spirit of despotism which so remarkably distinguished his chief, a piece of consolation fell in his way, which he little deserved.

Up rushed the master, if possible, in a greater fury than the lieutenant had been; his face bloated—his eyes winking—his feathers altogether ruffled, in short—and his tongue as busy pouring out oaths, as those of beggars are generally with praise.

"Rot—curse—sink the ship—he wouldn't stay another week in her—he'd invalide—he'd exchange—he'd go on half-day—he wouldn't do another day's duty, under such a fellow as Fidget, if he'd go down on his knees and pray for it!"

"Well, well, master," said Llewellyn, smiling, though he scarcely knew why, "I don't think there's much danger of that; but what's the matter?"

"The matter! Oh! by the piper that played before Moses, I never was so insulted in my life! A little whipper-snapper like that, to say—"

"What!"

"Why, to tell me that he'd take the charge of the ship out of my hands! I, who know every inch of the English channel and French coast as well as I did my mammy's apron! And he!—what the devil does he know about either? From this day I swear—"

"By Cot, master, here comes the squall at last!" interrupted Llewellyn, running to the gangway and looking out to windward, where every trace of the white line of the English coast was shut out, and nothing was visible but a dark mass of misty vapour, while underneath it warred and foamed the agitated surface of the sea, an unbroken mass of dazzling white.

As the lieutenant spoke, the master's eye followed that of his companion.

"Make haste, for heaven's sake!—fly down to the cabin and call the captain. As the Lord lives! if that squall overtakes us with all this sail set, we're lost.—Run, my boy, run!—or stay, do you remain on deck and shorten sail for your life, while I jump below."

"—Not one inch of it, master; not one inch do you stir on such an errand.—No man does my duty," sternly replied the Welshman, laying his hand on the master's collar; "if we ever want to teach the skipper a lesson not to give humbugging orders to his officers, and to leave off his rascally fits of obstinacy, now's the time to do it. Don't be afraid of the squall, man!—it'll only carry away a spar or two, and do Fidget all the good in the world. May be, next time, he won't insult either his master or the officer of the watch, who does his duty. Stay you, and remember the captain's orders are, not to shorten a stitch of sail. I'll walk leisurely down and report the squall to him,

and if he loses a topmast or so, it's his own fault, let them go. I'll be back in a minute; and remember you're a fool if you do anything except she's flung on her beam-ends!"

"But, Llewellyn—I say, Llewellyn," replied the master, not knowing, in his perplexity, what to do.

He spoke, however, to the idle air. Llewellyn had coolly turned on his heel, and walked down the hatchway with as much gravity and decorum, as if he was going to a funeral—little thinking how near he was in truth to the grave of hundreds.

While the master stood gazing at the terrific war of elements that approached, not knowing whether to transgress the orders of Fidget, or risk the safety of the whole ship's crew by obeying them—now looking at the object of his terror, now at the pile of canvass towering above—fear, doubt, and indecision stamped on every feature, a sudden flap of all the sails startled him from his trance of bewilderment, and the ship suddenly righted.

Looking up, he beheld the canvass drooping listlessly from the yards, and not a breath of air seemed stirring. In this dreadful pause the faint hope that first broke upon his mind of a false alarm, was far more rapidly expelled than it had ever been excited. The air, rendered temporarily calm by this passing lull, brought painfully powerful to the ear the warring hurricane that swept towards the frigate with the swiftness and the roar of a thousand chariots rushing to battle.

Broad, vivid streaks of lightning, too, flashed from right to left of the dark cloud, and gave a phosphorescent brilliancy to the foam of waters beneath, that was scarcely needed to increase the awful grandeur of the scene. While terribly distinct, to leeward, by this dangerous light, appeared the long, low line of the French coast, circled, as a lee shore frequently is, with two miles' depth of breakers.

"Good Heavens?" cried the poor master, stamping on the deck with vexation. "Why doesn't the captain come? A few seconds more, and it will be too late! Well, if I'm broken for it, I can wait no longer!"

—"Boatswain's mate!" giving the order at the top of his voice, "all hands shorten sail!"

"Belay there—pipe belay!" responded a thin, squeaking voice at his elbow.

The master turned aghast, and there, with his head and shoulders above the hatchway, he beheld Fidget coming up, after his most stately manner, unable to view the horizon to windward, and dreaming nothing of the fate in store for him; while just below, was the head of Llewellyn, grinning, and nodding, and winking, at the master, as if in the very height of enjoyment.

"Master!" cried the captain, springing upon deck. "How is it you presume, sir, to shorten sail without orders—retire to your cabin, sir, under"—arrest, he would have added; but the voice of the thunder-cloud, and the breath of the tempest, were too potent even for a post-captain——

## CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

### THE SUBJECT OF THE FORMER CHAPTER CONTINUED.

A CRASH, as if the ship's decks had been beaten together—a blaze of light, as instantly quenched in a deluge of water—and a blow under which the frigate staggered like a rocking wherry—all came together. At length the defied tornado had burst upon her in all its o'erpowering might!—Away flew the three topmasts over her side, with all their sails and all their gear. With scarce an interval of half a second, away followed the jib-boom and then the mizen-mast.

The first heavy sea had struck her broad upon the weather-bow, just before the beam; and when the resistless volume of deep blue sea ceased for a moment to pour over her devoted deck, her commander beheld with a repentance all too late, the entire weather-gangway washed away, the boats unshipped from the booms, the boom-lashings broken adrift, the booms themselves unstowed, the frigate on her beam-ends, and a mass of hammocks, spars, yarn, and wreck choking up her midships, and cutting off all communication between the forecastle and quarter-deck.

Nor was this all. The forecourse had, by its immense strain, snapped the outrigger in the middle, and was now flapping right and left, with the heavy block and part of the spar attached, threatening instant death to every living thing that came within its range; while, to complete the danger, the main-tack had remained firmly fixed on the gangway, inextricably entangled amid the wreck of the hammock-netting, and bringing the vessel beneath the frightful seas that poured in ceaseless succession over her.

Not a sound could be heard amid the roaring of the tempest, but the shrieks of those affrighted wretches, who, wholly uninured to naval life, now rushed with difficulty upon deck, to find themselves encompassed on one side by a scene of horrors which appalled the oldest seamen, and on the other by a dreary expanse of the enemy's coast, covered with breakers, towards which every passing moment conveyed them nearer—the helpless prey of dangers, the more frightful from being most imperfectly revealed.

It is at such moments as these, when Nature laughs at man's miserable distinctions, that her own are most apparent. It is at moments of peril and extremity like this, that genius and skill are privileged to gather the laurels of a life. Not an order could be heard—not a tone of the human voice, save that of impotent bewailing, be distinguished. The captain, who had so admirably brought his ship to this pass, stood beating his forehead on his own quarter-deck with one hand, while with the other he clung to one of the stranded mizen-shrouds for support. The officers, who, by their want of boldness, had allowed him to bring them like sheep to the sacrifice, remained

still panic-stricken, and unable to devise what should be done, or if anything, indeed, was available. At this perilous moment, when the ship was filling as rapidly as she could, the slight but strong figure of a youth was seen to pass from the taffrail over Fidget's head, under the imminent peril of being momentarily washed away, along by the overstrained main-shrouds, and thence down upon the unprotected gangway, over which the water was sweeping momentarily in dense masses. Here, with a determination that few could, under such immense difficulties, have sustained, the young sailor wound along like some wily serpent, clinging to the wreck of the gangway, until he reached the main-tack. He was then seen to lift his head above the waters that poured over him, as if to gain a moment's breath. This done, he crouched still lower than before, raised his hand with a tomahawk, and gave one vigorous stroke.—Quick as the blow itself, up rose the vast cloud of distended canvass that had hitherto kept down the frigate like some frightful incubus. A blow like the discharge of a thunderbolt followed this act of liberation, and the main-course, like the foresail, in a few minutes whipped itself into ribbons.

The frigate now slightly righted, but still both the fore and main-sheets were buried under water. But the example of daring set was followed; both were at last let go, and the ship brought as near an even heel as the hurricane would permit.

Toggle and Mainstay were both standing under cover of the weather bulwark on the quarter-deck, when they witnessed the gallant conduct of the young seaman—the more courageous and commendable from having originated solely from himself; for command none could, as we have before said, either give or hear. As he passed back to the comparative security of the quarter-deck, a common instinct made them both extend their hands to one whose ready thought and skilful services had in all human probability saved the frigate. Gratified as he naturally was, he returned the mute but friendly greeting, and in his features they at once recognised young Prestone—one of the victims of The Pressgang.

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## CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

### WHAT FARTHER BEFELL THE NERO.

In this world a numerous class of beings seem born for little if any other purpose than that of confounding cause and effect; and when, by any possibility, a choice can be made, of separating the two, to prefer the former, seemingly unmindful, that if it possess any value at all, it is from its power to produce the latter.

With these worthy people, then, Lord Nelson was no sailor, Crom-

well no legislator, Erskine no lawyer, Wolfe no soldier, Bailley no physician, nor even Shakspeare a proper dramatist. That the first was pre-eminent in winning victories, the second in successfully governing a great empire, the third in gaining verdicts, the fourth in making conquests, the fifth in saving patients, and the last in producing the best dramas in any language, is to them of little import.

Wise people! They weigh not the means by the end, they tell us, nor the labours by the result; so that a marshaller of squadrons, a master of forms, a crammer of precedents, a martinet of skeleton drills, a writer of elegant pill Latin, or an idolator of the unities, may each rank at the head of their professions. We confess to a different tendency; we care not how the colours are laid on, so that the picture be produced. We are outrageous enough to consider achievement no bad ingredient in the value of character; and we hold cutting a Gordian knot to be the best method of untying it.

With these heterodox opinions, we venture to think, that though Captain Fidget was generally extolled as an excellent seaman, he certainly did not demonstrate his right to such a title in his management of the Nero.

No one ever yet surpassed him in what is termed "the handling of a ship," over a quiet glass of wine, or the uninterrupted authority of an examination table. In light winds and smooth water he was superb. Even in a smart breeze few surpassed him; while reefing or shifting topsails in sight of the fleet was his point of perfection; the topsail-yards went up to the mast-heads to a single second of time; the men laid in like automata, the new topsails rose "with one accord," and the old ones came down after the like manner. But on the present occasion, we grieve to say that the perfect Fidget was at fault. The truth was, he hadn't practised "white-squall catching." To see, therefore, his three sticks whipped out of his frigate *without* the aid of a sheer hulk; his starboard gangway taken down *without* the dock-yard hands; his booms unstowed *without* the assistance of his captain of the afterguard; and his boats hoisted out to sea *without* a single whip upon the yards; all this we say struck the little percolator as being exceedingly irregular—something, in short, he'd never seen before, and he knew not what to say to it. So, shrinking beneath the starboard bulwark of the quarter-deck, and holding on by one of the rig-bolts, a mass of images swept rushing through his mind—so to call it—without leaving any distinct thought or positive perception behind them.

Nothing, meanwhile, could be more awful than the state of the frigate—a perfect wreck in everything essential to the management of a ship, her fore and mizen masts gone by the board, and only so much of the remaining spar standing as supported the main-yard, the sail depending from which, and thundering in the tempest, threatened every moment to involve its supporter in the general ruin. With a considerable portion of her crew already swept overboard, and the remainder panic-stricken; her waist-bulwarks demolished, and her

decks impassable, the lately beautiful frigate now rolled a helpless mass of ruin on the waters, half swamped already, and hastening with every second of time towards those fatal breakers to leeward, from which, when once within their foaming circle, no human skill could rescue her.

Now, when wholly too late, these frightful truths all rushed upon the mind of Fidget, but they only produced that horror and confusion which suspended what slight powers it ever had possessed. His misfortunes certainly needed little increase, but, that no doubt on this point might remain, the Cambrian resolved to take his revenge of his superior's former insolence, and, carefully seeking the little man out, at this terrific juncture went up to him, as officer of the watch, and bawled in his ear—

"Will it please you to shorten sail, sir?"

History has not informed us whether Fidget, like the criminal at the gallows with his mother's ear, made an effort to bite off that of Llewellen. If not, it could have been from no want of inclination.

"*No*, sir!" screamed Fidget, in the utmost rage, somewhat unnecessarily, since he had not even a thread of canvass to shorten, much less a sail.

"Very well, sir," responded Llewellyn, and touching his hat with the same imperturbable gravity, he scrambled back to where the master and first lieutenant were endeavouring to screech out a consultation.

Both these old officers perceived at a glance how hopeless it was to expect from their superior any assistance in the emergency into which his folly had brought them. With many years more of experience at sea than he possessed, they had both witnessed nearly similar catastrophes before, and were therefore not quite so completely at a loss.

"Can we save her, master, think you, by wearing?" demanded the first lieutenant of his brother officer, screaming the question in his ear, for though the frigate no longer remained on her beam-ends, the gale still howled over its prostrate victim with the most deafening fury, while heavy falling spray was as a continuous shower, and, for the time, nearly blinded every one exposed to it.

Cold as it was, the drops of sweat chased each other over the old master's brow, as, with a look of intense agony, he shaded his eyes from the dense foam flying over him, and looked to leeward, to see if any hope remained. To one unaccustomed to look out for the appearances of the land through all the difficulties of bad weather, nothing would have been observable but a dense mass of broken water and dark mist. But the habitual practice of the master served him in this extremity to detect the shore. Raising an arm in the direction of this still more dreaded cause of apprehension, he replied—

"There's the land!—There's no room to wear!—Nothing can save us now but an anchor!—Run forward on the forecastle, and get both bowers unstowed, while I run down below on the main-deck, and see every thing clear!—Send down to me as soon as you're ready, sir!—We haven't a moment to spare!"

Quick, at the word, down darted the little master to the deck below.

"Llewellyn, my boy! go you forward on the larboard side," said the first lieutenant, as soon as the master was gone, and unstow and clear away the small bower, while I go forward on the starboard side and see to the large. Fly, my boy! or we shall be too late!"

But easy as it was to enjoin speed, nothing could be more difficult than to execute it, since the ship was rolling heavily at every fresh surge of the sea; and the first lieutenant, who had to get to the forecastle to windward, found little or nothing to support him on his passage, the bulwark on the gangway being washed away, and the sea, every few second, making a clean breach over her; with neither booms, boats, nor rigging remaining, to help one from being swept off to leeward. On the larboard side these difficulties were increased, by the quantity of wreck over which it was necessary to scramble.

While the officers on the upper deck were contending with these difficulties, the master, as we have before stated, hurried below on the main, and there, to the best of their ability, and with a degree of quickness and vigour that bespoke a far different school from his present superior's, gave out the orders necessary for coming to an anchor.

If the confusion and disorder were great on the upper deck, they were scarcely less so here on the main. The carpenter's crew were endeavouring, as fast as they possibly could, to close the gun-ports, which, when the squall first burst upon the ship, were open both to windward and to leeward; the consequence had of necessity been, that immense volumes of water had been shipped on the lower deck, and the frigate all but filled, not only from that which poured in from the weather-ports, but also from that which overflowed the combings of the hatchways to leeward. It was only then, when the ship righted, that this imminent peril was lessened, and now the first alarm was partially over, the carpenter, a grey-headed old seaman, lost no time in guarding against its recurrence.

Still the heavy seas already shipped, made the frigate sink in the water considerably below her proper bearings, and the sea thus rushed through the scupper-holes, and kept her main-deck several inches under water; while the hatches being in the very act of being battened down, the few women and children who were on board below, set up a screaming and wailing, which added to the roar of the tempest, the creaking of the frigate's timbers, the confused shouting of voices, all ordering and none obeying, and the din of every moveable flying from right to left, in all the disorder of a ship just out of port, made a scene of distraction that none but those who have once witnessed similar horrors can well conceive.

In the midst of this pandemonium, so dark, from the excluded daylight, that a few fighting lanterns alone revealed what was passing around. The master, with admirable nerve and coolness, set the best example to his men to exert their utmost, by himself applying all his strength to execute a part of his own orders. With a lantern in one

hand, he was engaged with the other in casting off some temporary stops from one of the cables about to be used, encouraging the men around to make the utmost speed, when a heavy sea suddenly struck the frigate on her weather-beam. In an instant she was thrown on her beam-end again; down rushed the water in torrents from the waist-gratings above, while, like a perfect flood, the briny element came bubbling, weltering, and bursting up to leeward, till it nearly covered half her deck, from the scupper-holes and ports not yet closed. Staggering against the hencoops for support, the master, with his face turned aft, was using every effort to prevent his lantern from being extinguished. Already she began to right once more. The water was fast draining from her deck, when a noise, as of something bursting from its hold, and the sudden cry of human agony, induced him to look up. With a feeling of horror, that no event of that unfortunate morning had been hitherto able to create, he saw that the carpenter's mate, in his natural desire to save himself, had clung to the breeching of one of the main-deck guns. The tackle, in all probability faulty before, had given way from the sudden heeling of the frigate, and in less time than it has taken to recite the catastrophe—long before the least efficient assistance could be rendered—the master beheld the breeching and gun-tackles snap, with the quickness of thought, one after another, and the immense mass of iron plunge, first on the unhappy man clinging to it, and then roll over and over, and finally fall dead to leeward, with the whole of its vast weight and impetus on the frigate's side.

When the master beheld it falling, and saw that no effort could be sufficient to arrest its course, an involuntary consciousness of what must be the result, made him shade the sight from his eyes with his hand; but the sense both of hearing and of touch told him as plainly of what had happened, as if he still looked on. No sooner did the ponderous weight of iron strike the timbers of the frigate, than the shock vibrated from stem to stern, while a dull heavy sound, prolonged into a frightful crashing, tearing noise, too truly proclaimed the truth, that the falling mass had beat out a portion of the frigate's side, and gone through to the bottom. The jet of water that rushed through this frightful chasm, fairly reached the weather side of the main-deck. and filled the whole space like the act of a moment, while, with equal rapidity, a yell rang through the stifling waters, and spread itself out upon the pitiless tempest—"WE'RE FOUNDERING!—WE'RE FOUNDERING!" It was indeed too true! Almost in the same moment that this awful cry arose, down went the unhappy frigate! but she sunk only a few feet. She had already drifted over the tail of the sand-bank, and striking violently on the bottom once or twice, and momentarily lifted off again, each time by the heavy seas, she was gradually hove higher up the shoal, till her main-deck remained some three feet under water, while the whole force and fury of the sea poured over her. Had the accident of the gun happened but a few seconds before it did, she would have gone down in water sufficiently deep to have covered

every thing but her main-top, when every soul, but a few of the best swimmers, must have perished!

Even as it was, however, a frightful loss of life had occurred. The fore and main-hatchways being battened down, one or two only of the women on the lower-deck had found presence of mind sufficient to rush up the after-companion, when they found the water pouring in on the lower-deck, from the irreparable leak made by the shattered timbers that had given way to the fallen gun. Destruction staring them full on every side!—death already master of a great portion of their number, and pausing only for a moment's dalliance even upon the remainder of his prey!—how frightful was the prospect that extended its heavy vista before the horrified visions of those who yet survived on board the unhappy Nero!

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## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

### EFFECTS OF IGNORANCE AND OBSTINACY FURTHER ILLUSTRATED.

FIERCE and untiring poured the blast! With every moment, fresh fury seemed to animate the vast dark masses of waters that came swelling onwards, sea after sea, and suddenly striking the trembling sides of the stranded frigate, dashed up into high jets of foam, only to be dispersed into heavy showers and clouds of spray, that, falling on the exposed persons of those on board, drenched them to the skin anew, at every succeeding wave. Around, raged in every direction the long roaring breakers, that sighed and groaned in the bleak wintry wind, as if into them had been infused the life which had been violently and painfully reft away from such numbers on board.

In the horizon, landward—sufficiently gloomy by its dimly distinguished distance, to add to all the horrors of the scene, and yet sufficiently near to add to those horrors all the torments of delusive hope—stretched the low inhospitable shore of the French land, which to reach was a joy, but to reach was to reach as a prisoner, and which to fail in attaining, was to fail from life, and all that renders it so involuntarily dear. What other resource, alas! was left to them? Could they take to their boats?—Every one of these were long long since destroyed! Could they make the frigate available to get off?—Still more hopeless! There, where her timbers struck—there would the relentless fury of the gale plough up their eternal tomb! beside the numerous graves of those unfortunate victims, who already had perished in the surf! Without spars, rigging, or sails, they could not even have accomplished any thing of the sort, even if her hull had been sea-worthy!—this it never could be more! Did their anxious eyes turn, with far more burning hearts, toward the bleak expanse to seaward—there, perhaps, relenting destiny might yet allow some trusty sail, some friendly succour, to see and to assist them! Ah, no! Even

to be seen was to be shunned! and the flash that might reveal their necessity, would only establish them as beacons for avoidance! Was there then, indeed, no help!—was death so near!—was drowning so inevitable! The insupportable anguish of the hour scarcely left them breath to think of the reply; but this was not the worst. The raging of the tempest—the roaring of the waters—the howling of the winds—the startling crashes of the thunder—the furious beating of the breaking hull—the reckless curses of the seamen—were each and all too horrible in themselves for endurance! But still more touching, more heart-rending, than the whole combined, arose at momentary intervals the anguish-stricken wail of women, crowded aft upon the taffrail, some with infants hanging at their breasts—others fainting and swooning in the arms of their husbands, or their husband's messmates, for many of them, within the last thirty minutes, had been rendered widows!—these tearing their hair, in a mingled paroxysm of madness and despair!—those, urged by the delirium of terror, to give vent to cries that could only distract others, and utterly fail to assist themselves!

In this hour of extremity and confusion, where was their captain, whose obstinacy had brought upon them all this ruin?—where was the chief, whose duty it was to protect?—the leader, whose province it was to devise?—the commander, whose skill was to extricate and to rescue? The increase of the danger, so far from restoring his surprised faculties, seemed only to have confused them the more. Silently wringing his hands, when, by all the laws of poetical justice, he ought to have been wringing his neck, the weather bulwark of the quarter-deck afforded a temporary refuge to one who had deprived himself, and the hundreds under him, of any better.

At every second, the heavy seas, as they rolled cumulating and thundering towards the distant land, lifted up the noble hull of the frigate with the dense volume of their waters, only to let her plunge down again, with all the impetus of her own vast weight added to the terrific strength of every wave that topped upon her decks; thus alternately were her shivering crew drenched to the skin, or dashed rudely against the guns and bulwarks to which they clung; while every succeeding wave the cries of horror became less, as one wretched being after another, numbed by the bitter cold of a piercing January blast, was unable to maintain his hold with the strength required, and was washed away to leeward—their hapless bodies tumbling and struggling for a few seconds amid the waste of foam and angry waters, while their agonizing shrieks grew fainter and fainter at each moment, as their forms gradually grew less and less distinct—a limb was seen battling in fierce agony here, and another striking with the agony of death still farther off. The eye looked in vain for its reappearance again in the chaos of water, and the grave that is never filled received another victim.

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

### WHICH SHOWS THE POWER OF DANGER IN DISCLOSING THE STRONGEST MINDS.

In the midst of the scene we have described, where all the ordinary ties that bind society were loosened—where the strong instinct of self-preservation took the lead before every other emotion—where fear debased the nobler qualities of the heart, and true generosity obtained the noblest field for its developement. Discipline was overthrown with a rapidity that can be little conceived by those who have only witnessed its power in the heyday of security. Orders, it is true, were scarcely needed, for all seemed over; and it was well it was so, for no orders that required the least sacrifice of self would have been obeyed.

In one respect, at least, the rapidity with which misfortune had come upon them was productive of benefit. No time had been allowed for drunkenness. The spirits, as well as every other sustenant of life, was buried below the mass of sand and water with which the lower part of the ship was filled. What remained, therefore, of the Nero's crew were still in possession of their faculties, though sadly numbed with cold, and depressed by the threatening presence of instant death. Some, breathing only the most fearful curses, turned their eyes on the captain, as he remained crouching in his hiding-spot upon the quarter-deck. Others who had entirely resigned all hopes of life, flung themselves down upon the deck, and allowed the angry surges to beat over them in mute despair—the errors of a past life rising to increase their horror for the present, and painting still greater suffering in the future. A few there were, however, who still maintained the dogged courage and constancy of British seamen; and determining not to be beat even by death till his icy fingers should benumb their hearts, looked about them, even in this scene of desolation, for some means of effectually combating their terrific foe. Foremost among these was the young man who had already shewed so much presence of mind in cutting away the main tack—young Prestone. Going up to the first lieutenant, Toggle, who stood near his captain debating, if it can be so termed, with Mainstay, he touched his hat, without the least abatement of respect from that which he would have exhibited had they been moored in safety at Spithead, and putting his mouth near the officer's ear, bawled out—

"Can we do nothing, sir, to gain the land with these poor women," pointing to the cluster of seamen's wives who had been allowed to remain on the sailing of the ship from the Downs, because, as they alleged, they lived at Plymouth, and the Nero was to have touched

there for a few hours to take out some general officer to his destination.

Poor creatures! How often in this world do our warmest and kindest feelings betray us, and from a source of virtue and happiness entail on their possessors only the extreme of misery. Few or any of them really lived at this port, but anxious to delay the hour of parting to the last—eager to enjoy those hours of concentrated yet painful delight which precede the severance of those who are attached by the softer ties of life, they had lingered on board as they thought to enjoy the last twenty-four hours in the society of those from whom they might be parted for years—perhaps for ever; and now they were to pay the forfeit of their lives for a wish so natural—an indulgence so desired by all.

When Mainstay heard the question, he turned to Captain Fidget, saying in a tone of voice loud enough for all to hear—

"What would you wish done, sir?"

"Do what you like," was the reply, "nothing can save us."

"I fear that's too true," ejaculated Mainstay.

"I don't think so, sir," interposed Prestone; "bad as our case may be, despair can only make it worse. A few good hands might yet form a raft; and with the wind so dead on shore, we should only have to drift before it. At any rate, we must perish out here before relief could come to us. Indeed, long before this gale blows itself out, the frigate must go to pieces; she never can stand this hammering long. I can hear her timbers breaking up below at every surge; and once let her part, every soul must perish in a few minutes."

"A raft!" returned the lieutenant, a momentary look of hope illuming his features, to disappear as rapidly as it rose, "if we *could* frap one together, it might get through even as heavy a sea as this. But how can we make a raft when scarcely a single spar is left on board?"

"Oh, never mind that, sir; we'll soon make up for the want of spars."

"But even then we can get little farther forward—we shall get no hands to help us, I fear."

"A dozen, sir, may do the work; and here are four of them," pointing to Mainstay and Llewellyn.

"By Cot, the lad's right, upon *my* honour," said the latter, joining the conference; "we might have thought of this before."

"Never mind that," said Mainstay; neither his fat nor his good humour seemingly the least disturbed by the change in his prospects. "Besides," added he, in the same tone, "there are several of the midshipmen not washed overboard yet."

"Aye, I forgot that," gravely rejoined Mainstay, who in the smoothest of hours had as little idea of a joke as the Kamtschadales have of curry powder; and would far sooner have believed in a man's jumping overboard than that a living soul should venture on a jest of any sort just now. "Yes," continued Mainstay, "I forgot the Mid-

shipmen;" and he looked round for them, but not one could be seen —and for a very sufficient reason, of which even, if hinted to him, he would have been still more incredulous.

Captain Fidget, who always took care of number one, had in his fore-cabin a very large safe, which was at all times stored with meat pies, tongues, pasties, corned beef, soft tack or bread, various condiments, and one or two bottles of spirits and wine.

Innumerable had been the plans and stratagems laid by the denizens of the cockpit to surprise this fortlet of good cheer. But its strong position in the captain's cabin, and the numerous surrounding difficulties had hitherto defied them, both by night and day, to their infinite grief. No sooner, therefore, did they behold the bands of all subordination loosened, and the ship in her present state of imminent deadly peril, than they perceived not only that this was the time, if ever, to succeed; but further, that if they did not succeed *now*, neither cupboard nor midshipmen might remain much longer in existence to compose the materials of success. Instead, therefore, of troubling themselves about going down, or going up, or going abroad, or in short of going at any thing but a go of brandy, they held a brief and whispered consultation on the poop, as to the eligibility of a cutting-out party in the captain's cabin, while the surrounding circumstances remained so favourable. The very mention of the project was hailed with universal approbation, and one after another they all sneaked down the companion unnoticed in the general hurry and outcry, and without meeting a single soul on the main-deck, except the purser, whom they found too busy to heed them, wringing his hands by the side of the wardroom skylight, where the vexed waters were flowing in selfish riot over thirteen hundred pounds in gold, which he had been incautious enough to draw out from a bank on his own account at Chatham, and had been devoting to some fortune-making speculation, when he should arrive in the West Indies.

As with agonized features he gazed and gazed upon the bubbling waters welling up from the wardroom, and thought of all his darling gold, with which his eyes had been feasted in glorious security last night, and now vainly plotted how once more to bring to light its ponderous treasures, he seemed half inclined to try the diver's art, and only half restrained by a dire sort of consciousness, that so much of the precious metal would be too heavy for him to hope he could fish —and yet to lose it! Horrible idea! Was it not better for him to lose his life thrice over. He would plunge and try the risk. Ah! what was it stopped him on the brink—the very eve and act of sinking? Oh! he had forgotten—his wife and family—true—well, he would gain assistance—some more bulky form might better bear such ballast. He heard footsteps approaching—he listened, and saw the cutting-out party of midshipmen come skipping down.—No, not them. —He'd trust any set of beings rather than midshipmen—though there certainly were one or two very fat hobbledehoys amongst them, who could have floated with a much heavier weight, and thought little of it; and he *could* have found it in his heart to have given five or even

ten pounds at the most to have got back his darling specie—specie was so valuable in the colonies, with all the rate of war discounts—but not to them—no, not to midshipmen—he couldn't mention it to them—it might be less easy to get it back from their clutches than those of the inexorable sea—so after a piteous scrutinizing look at the middies, as they passed him, he once more turned his hopeless gaze upon the place where the gun-room had once been visible, absorbed in his acute grief; and looking, as he held on by one of the stanchions, and peered downwards with his miserable thin hooked nose, blue as his jacket with the cold, not unlike one of those melancholy birds, the bitterns, who may be seen standing for hours on one leg, in the midst of some watery waste, watching for their prey.

As for the middies, they cast a moment's look, but scarcely so long a thought, on the purser, and little guessed what was passing in his mind, as happy in themselves at plundering their skipper's larder, as if they had expressly ordered the whole scene; and had the question been put to them, would have told "old Nipcheese," how infinitely they preferred a bottle of wine and a cold tongue to all his guineas, which they would no doubt have devoted, together with their owner, to a place supposed, by general assent, to be considerably warmer than any of their present positions. Once arrived at the scene of attack, they found the captain's safe securely locked, but the application of a tomahawk, from over one of the cabin guns, speedily superseded the necessity of a key—the comestibles were rapidly divided, and the greater part ravenously devoured, when, to the credit of the young rogues, it must be added, that they concealed the rest under their jackets and in their pockets, and carried it back to the poor women, who were huddled together on the quarter-deck, and to whom the relief was indeed a most timely supply.

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## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

### TREATS OF A MIDSHIPMAN'S GLORY.

While on the main-deck were proceeding scenes such as we have described, and such as any one beholding from the shore the perilous extremity of the frigate would have been so little likely to imagine, on deck the efforts to construct some means of escaping the destruction which threatened, were not abated. Those, by whose efforts the necessary measures were taken, were the three officers whom we have mentioned, Prestone, and one of the boatswain's mates, for the boatswain himself had long since been washed overboard.

The project of the young seaman once adopted, there still remained some formidable difficulties to be surmounted.

"What you propose to use as spars for this raft, I cannot easily

imagine," said the first lieutenant, taking up the reply of Prestone, where we momentarily turned aside from it in the last chapter.

"Why, sir," said the young seaman, "there are still the two spare topsail-yards lashed in either mainchains."

"Yes, there they are, and there they may remain for all the use that we can make of them. As to floating them to leeward, and then making a raft under our lee, the thing's impossible—we should only lose the life of every man that attempted it, and after all never get three sticks lashed together."

"That's true enough, sir, and it would be madness to make the attempt; but what I propose is, to cut adrift the topsail-yards from the chains, first on one side and then on the other, taking one at a time—top up the after-yardarm by a tackle from the mainmast-head—then bear out the foremast one, so as just to fall clear abaft the mainchains—then hoist it in-board, and lower away, leaving one yardarm resting on the quarter-deck hammocks on one side, and the other on the other—leaving as much space as the length of the quarter-deck between the two yards, and filling up the space between with planking and carlings, which the carpenters can rip up from the waist and forecastle-decks and the spare studdingsail-booms, which are still left in the lee-waist netting, while over all we can lash the waist-gratings, and over them a spare maintopsail—if that won't float the best part of us to the shore I'm much mistaken."

"But how will you get it into the water?"

"Launch it bodily overboard with a tow-rope, and then haul it alongside to leeward."

"By Cot, Toggle, and a devilish good plan too! Upon *my* honour, we may still hope to pass the best years of our lives in a French prison, if we are lucky, yet."

This speech, uttered without any meaning to disspirit the crew, was overheard by Fidget, who, coming into reversionary possession of all his faculties the moment that an opportunity of finding fault presented itself, sprung a step forward from his corner, calling out—

"Mr. Llewellyn! Mr. Llewellyn, sir! it's my particular orders that you abstain from all such unofficer-like remarks. You needn't disspirit the crew, even if you cannot make yourself useful."

"By Cot, Captain Fidget!" responded the peppery Welshman, all his remaining blood seeming, at this rebuke, to rally back into his pale cheek, where the icicles were clinging to his large bushy whiskers. "*I* only say, sir, *I* wish I were the least useful officer on board at this moment, sir!—that's *my* opinion, sir, by Cot!—and my opinion, sir, is still more, sir, that those who brought us into this scrape, ought to get us out of it, sir!—that's *my* opinion, sir!—*if they can!*"

What more the fiery descendant of St. David might have added, the fates only know, for at this moment a cry arose from some of the neighbouring seamen who had been listening, of—

"Toss him overboard!—Toss the Jonas overboard!"

Expressions which Fidget's conscience rendered so strictly appli-

cable to his own case, that he slunk back to his former resting-place without uttering another word; while the first lieutenant, dreading the lengths to which the rage of the crew might go, if once put into motion, wisely and kindly took him by the arm, and leading him forward, asked him to superintend the getting out from the lee-waist netting the spare studding-sail, booms, oars, &c, which it contained.

"A pretty devil of a fellow for a skipper!"

"Well, well, never mind."

"Aye, that's all very fine—but what shall I do with the seamen's hammocks, as they're unstowed?"

"Oh, send them aft to those poor women on the taffrail, with orders to take the blankets out, and wrap themselves up the best way they can. It's not of them or us either, my boy, I fear, who will see the sun set this day!"

"Never mind that, my boy; we must have given up the trade of sun-setting some day or another."

"Yes, but we might as well have put that day off as long as we could."

"Not a bit of it, my boy!—there's a matter that sits heavier at my heart this day than the whole of it."

"What's that?"

"Why, what should it be but to think that one of the finest kits that ever lieutenant in the pride of his heart took to sea with him, is now two fathoms deep in sand and salt water! and that's not the worst of it; for wasn't I fool enough, and ass enough, Cot help me! to pay my tailor's bill before starting, just for the sake of a little lubberly discount the devil tempted me with."

Here a heavy sea poured over the defenceless waist of the Nero, and the Welshman had enough to do to hold his own, while his brother officer scrambled aft to take the steps necessary for constructing his raft.

"Now, my boys," said he, going up to the group of men who were crouching toward the stump of the mizenmast, "a few hours' labour, and I hope we may stand a chance of once more getting a dry skin ashore. Boatswain's mate! pipe all hands to make raft!"

"Aye, aye, sir," said one of the boatswain's survivors, leaping out from among his fellows, glad at any rate of some employment to warm his freezing limbs and divert his mind. Forth came his silver call, and in the most powerful tone which exposure and exhaustion still left, gave the pipe desired.

"Now, then, my lads," continued Toggle, "divide yourselves into parties. Carpenters! go forward on the forecastle, and rip up the waist and forecastle decks to windward. Keep the planks as long as you possibly can, and see what lengths you can saw out some of the carlings. Forecastle-men! see if you can get the spritsail-yard in board, and bear it aft here to the quarter-deck. Maintop-men! 'way aloft some of you, and get a whip on the masthead, and overhaul it down upon deck. Afterguard! stand by to hand aft the fall, and walk

away with it. Sailmakers! below there some of you, and rouse out of the bins a spare fore and maintop-sail!"

"Bins, sir!" responded the sailmaker, starting, for if there is an objection to be made to any project, a sailmaker is sure to be the man to stand first in the field. "We can't get at the sail-bins now, sir. They're a foot or two deep in sand by this time, to say nothing of their being under water. How can we, then, get a sail out of them, sir?"

"How, sir! why, by diving, of course."

"Please, I can't swim, sir, let alone diving!"

"Well, then, die and be ——— to you!" angrily returned the lieutenant, his good humour momentarily forsaking him at this opposition from one of those whom he was thus exerting his very utmost to save. "Here," elevating his voice to the rest of the men, "is there no one present who will volunteer to dive down on the lower-deck, and get out a couple of topsails from the sail-bins?"

"I will, sir," instantly responded a voice. The lieutenant turned, and Prestone stood beside him.

"So will I!"

"And I!"

"And I!" was repeated in several quarters, as the generous example, once set, was quickly followed.

"That's right, my boys," replied the lieutenant, clapping Prestone on the shoulder. "Now, then, down below with ye, and set to work, and take care of yourselves for once, for you're too good to be lost! Mizentop-men! out into the weather mainchains, and stand by to unlash the spare maintopsail-yard. Maintop, there! are you ready with that tackle?"

But the question, though loudly repeated, stood little chance of being heard; and the seamen to whom it was addressed had not yet gained the top.

If the scene appeared horrible and threatening from the deck below, how infinitely more so did it become as the spectator ascended the only shrouds which the frigate still had standing. The blast, thick with the spray, penetrated through every fibre of the seamen's clothes, and spread a continued veil before his face, that partially revealing some of the darker features of the prospect, and concentrating others, only made the whole more hideous. The mast, strong as it appeared, remained quaking and quivering to its very step, as one mass of water after another swept over its devoted hull, while every time the ship surged heavily upon her bed of sand. The jerk was so terrific, that even the strongest heart could not help fearing that the whole towering mass—yards, top, shrouds, and all—were going over her lee side. Strained as the rigging had been during the first squall, while the Nero lay on her beam-ends, the larboard stays, &c. still hung in a complete bight, or semicircle, while those on the starboard, or right-hand side, had to bear the whole strain, and the moment that this was temporarily taken off them by the motion of the ship, the "stick," as

the sailors term the gigantic pine, rocked to and fro, and shook the sustaining cordage in a manner seemingly far too rough for any strength to endure—the parting of one single strand of which, might, and in all probability would, have been the signal for the rest to follow, and then, "good night to Marmion!" Nor let the description be thought exaggerated. Such a situation once felt, can never be forgotten; and no description ever can surpass the trying reality! At every few seconds, the seamen who ascended felt the power of the wind so great, as scarcely to be able to withstand it and hold on. Turning involuntarily a rapid glance over the shoulder, to see if the storm was inclined to abate, beheld nothing but a dense white cloud, from which, as from some general focus of woe and danger, the sea came rushing on, covered with foam, and bearing every mark of violence, as one enormous wave chased on another, of a dark, leaden, sullen aspect in the depths of its dimly-lighted hollow, while it reared aloft, at a height scarcely credible, a threatening crest of curling waters, whose roar was plainly audible long before it broke on the trembling sides of the frigate, and hid every soul on board from the anxious gaze of those aloft; leaving it doubtful whether either party were ever to behold their fellows again!

It is in scenes like these that the nerves of men are tried; and who that ever came through one or two of them, can meet in aftertimes the minor ills of life without feeling that calm self-possession which is estimated, and rightly estimated, at so high a value, by the rest of mankind, who have had no opportunity of buying pearls at so large a price. The steel that has received "the ice brook's temper," presents an edge that softer metals only assay but cannot turn; and this reflection may often smooth to the young the bitterness of adversity—an ordeal never yet endured with fortitude, without ultimately bringing to the sufferer a five-fold harvest of fruit in happier days.

The main-top gained at length, the necessary tackle was fixed and overhauled, so that those on the deck below could affix its purchase to the desired point, which was the aftermost end of the spare main-topsail-yard.

"Give it me," generously cried Llewellyn, seizing the block and jumping over the hammock-netting into the mizen-chains, which from the fall of the mizen-mast, and consequent cutting away of the mizen-shrouds, was left so wholly unprotected as to render the risk of being washed overboard very imminent at every fresh sea that struck the frigate.

"Stay a moment, my boy," said Mainstay, seizing him by the collar, "don't be so mad as to expose yourself in that way.—Mizen-top-men! a rope's-end here. Now, hold up your arms—so—let me pass this round you, or it's ten to one we ever see you aboard here again."

"By *my* honour, and if that isn't well thought of. There, a running bowline knot's the safest—let me whip it over *my* shoulders—that's right—haul taut. Now, I've forgotten the selvedge for the

topsail-yard. Now, Toggle, when I whistle, sway away—there'll be no hearing orders out there. Take care you're not too rough, and so spring the spar. Whose in the main-chains?"

"Mainstay."

"Very good."

And fully prepared at all points, Llewellyn jumped into the mizen-chains, and having cut away the last lashings, was busy in fixing the selvidge-strap round the arm of the yard, when a heavy rolling sea burst unobserved full on the quarter of the frigate. In an instant poor Llewellyn was buried in the mass of water—fairly lifted from his post, and grasping with all the confusion of a drowning man at every object that presented itself. As usual, none of these were of a nature to offer a fair hold; and when the Welshman's eyes next opened on the light of heaven, obscured and clouded as it was, he found himself floating, a mere speck, upon the bosom of a vast surge, that swept him away in its resistless retreat, from everything that yet connected him with life, and left him like a weed upon the ocean, to be thrown or dashed wherever its savage, though insensible, caprice might dictate.

In this alarming situation, the first emotion that presented itself to his mind must naturally have been that of extreme horror at the unexpected fate which had befallen him. The next, that of comparative calmness, on remembering the precaution with which Toggle's kindness had furnished him against this very accident. With sudden grasp, as he lay, resistlessly borne upon the summit of the vast wave that had washed him from the frigate, he felt for the rope attached to his waist. What a fierce—what a frightful excitement must have been felt in that moment. How rapturous—how inexpressible the satisfaction at finding that it still girt him round. Exposed to imminent danger as he had been for the last few hours, and with momentary death staring him full in the face for the latter portions of them, and that, too, by a cruel form of considerable suffering, he had not believed it possible that the mind could, under so many opposing circumstances, nourish the love of life with half the tenacity which the feelings of that moment displayed. To seize the rope, and begin to haul himself on board was the work of a moment. It might have struck him with surprise that his loss did not at once seem noticed on board—that he did not at once see on the quarter the head of the first lieutenant, or some other hand helping him to regain the frigate. But then it was possible they might have been struck by the sea on board—or—or—a thousand things. Still he hauled away, hand over hand, upon his rope's-end, to the best of his ability—maintaining himself at the same time on the agitated surface of the sea, and gulping down, every few seconds, large dozes of the sea-water. Some misgivings may also have arisen in his heart, that the rope came so readily to his hand; but it might have been the end of a coil, and he had not yet drawn it out to its point of attachment. The distance, too, to which he seemed to have been drifted already from the frigate, by the backwash or undertow, appeared remarkable—and once more

he directed his anxious gaze towards the Nero—once more he renewed his efforts to drag himself on board. The few seconds which had elapsed since the accident, to him seemed interminable—still no check could he feel at the end of his safety-line—and—was it the intervening mist or spray—or was it fright had weakened his eyes?—but scarcely could he detect what was passing on the decks of the ship, where he had so lately formed one of the chief officers. A feeling of indescribable horror came over his heart—for a brief pause he ceased his efforts. The intense cold of the water, which in his strong excitement he had before scarcely felt, now appeared to palsy every particle of remaining strength; while the drops of death, clearly distinguishable from the torrents of brine with which he was drenched, seemed to his agitated feelings to be starting from every pore. Where were his friends? Where were his shipmates—his messmates? Where were Toggle and Mainstay, to help in saving whom, among the rest, he had thus perilled his own existence? How ungrateful was their conduct! How bitter such ingratitude! Leaving him to perish, like a dog whose day of service was over; or worse, resigning a drowning man to the doubtful resources of his own strength, when the slightest effort of theirs would have put his rescue beyond all doubt. But no—he wronged them. There they appeared at last! There was the black glazed hat of Toggle distinct among the rest,—momentarily catching the light on its round polished surface. If he beheld their motions rightly, they were looking for him in the mizen-chains. Did they not know, then, that he had been washed overboard? Surely it must be so. Now they look out for him at sea. Quick as thought he lifted up an arm above the waves, as he floated on the raging sea, to attract their attention, little estimating the right distance to which he had been drifted, or that amid the confusion of foam and broken water—here a patch of dull dark-green, and there a maze of dazzling white—even his *body* itself was but a mere speck, and his arm all but invisible.

The effort thus well intended, was as quickly followed by the inevitable consequence, namely, that of plunging him once more beneath the sea, and further exhausting the vital energy that was already rapidly expiring. Cheered for a moment, however, by the hope that his comrades had seen him, and now that he was missed, that he must be rapidly dragged on board, he no sooner rose again, than with all the gallant and undying determination of his profession, he began once more to draw home that which he fondly believed to be the link that bound him to life and safety.

After dragging one or two arm's lengths towards him, who shall imagine the horror and consternation of his mind on feeling—not that gradually tightening strain which would bespeak its firm attachment to the frigate, but the loose unfastened end in his hand!

The truth must now have flashed upon his mind with tenfold agony. In the hurry of the moment, they had given him as a safety-line one of the brace-falls, which had been accidentally cut in clearing away the wreck of the mizen-mast, and which consequently had no other

connection with the ship than that of lying upon her decks, from whence poor Llewellyn had been gradually detaching it, during the whole time he had been overboard, with as much fatal success as if his sole object had been to withdraw the only hold on existence that still remained for him.

It may be doubted whether any human agony ever surpassed that moment of Llewellyn's. Had he known his fate at first, he might have submitted to it like a brave man as he undoubtedly was, without a murmur. But after being played with in finite corporeal suffering, like a trout, to find that the death-pang was still to be passed—the last struggle yet to be made!—What reason, what courage could meet such a shock with anything like fortitude? It may readily be conceived, that for the first moment he contemplated undergoing these at once, and striving with his fate no further; but taking, perhaps, one last look at the old frigate, on board which so many hours and scenes of his life had passed, he saw that the undertow had not only left him just amid-ships, but carried him so far off to sea, as to bring him once more under the influence of the direct current that was setting towards the shore; so that if he kept afloat a few minutes longer, he stood a chance of either being dashed against her sides, or left upon her decks by one of the heavy seas that continually broke over her.

It was a frightful alternative to choose; but at the worst it was only death, and as the same penalty was attached to declining both as to accepting either, he, as far as any human calculation can divine, adopted it, and was seen to direct all his remaining vigour to take the chance so offered. Now, too, that every hope seemed over, and his mind was released from that most horrid of all mental torments, suspense, he may have felt more calm and collected; and instead of using any unnecessary exertion, was observed to content himself with the slightest motion of his arms, sufficient to keep him afloat; while to the accomplishment of this end he was further cheered by Toggle and some others, as he once more approached the frigate—waving their hats towards him, in admiration of his gallant struggle, and notice of readiness on their parts to help in rendering that struggle successful.

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## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

### TOGGLE THE MAN OF FEELING—THE PURSER THE MAN OF PELF CONTRASTED.

While this brief tragedy had been enacting without the timbers of the devoted ship, little less harrowing had been the feelings of most on board. Few people are so quick at estimating the good qualities of their superiors as sailors—none so ready to make allowance for their

defects of character, and putting aside these, to reward those with their warmest admiration and affection.

With both his brother officers, then, and the seamen, Llewellyn was deservedly popular; and when his loss was first discovered, it produced as much and more excitement on board the frigate, than, under the absorbing circumstances of her situation, anything could reasonably have been expected to do.

They soon found out what had happened; but reproach was trebly idle when not only could the fault not be repaired, but the discipline to support reproach was gone. They made one or two efforts to serve him, by throwing overboard gratings with ropes attached; but they were borne in a widely different direction, and deeply as it might grieve them, they resigned their fiery favourite to his fate, in which, as they had too good reason to believe, he only preceded themselves.

Toggle's quick eye had, however, instantly detected his uplifted arm, distant as it was, and never losing sight of him, now not only watched the moment when he might be once more cast on board, but set several hands on the lee waist, and stood himself amongst them, if possible to break his fall should he be dashed against the decks, or arrest his progress, should he prove, as he rightly anticipated, too exhausted to help himself.

At last, on came the wave, and as they had all hoped, Llewellyn borne right upon its crest. With infinite force the body of the sea struck the frigate's bends, causing her to heel unusually over, while Llewellyn, carried on the very summit, was dashed over her level deck, and, owing to the extreme cant of the ship, too high for the lee gangway to intercept his body. The men on the look-out to save him, with Toggle at their head, made a consentaneous spring. Some of them caught a bight* of the rope which was still attached to his body. The cry, "All right," yet hovered on their lips, when suddenly the ship rose, and the body still descending with full force, the right temple struck violently on the iron fluke of the frigate's stream anchor, which was stowed in her larboard fore-chains, and falling heavily into the tormented bubble of waters below, a momentary tinge of blood was seen upon the dazzling surface, as it closed over its gallant victim, and nothing of Llewellyn remained to his friends but the memory of his worth, and the severed life-line that hung idly in their hands.

It was utterly impossible that anything could be more melancholy, or more touching, in that dreadful hour, when the lives of every one on board seemed depending on less than a single hair—if a slighter tenure there can be—than to see the looks of deep grief and disappointment with which those who had done their best to save him gazed down into that insatiable grave in which Llewellyn had been swallowed up!—that grave which yet yawned so widely and so fiercely for his survivors!

* "Bight," a bend in the middle.

In the sunshine of life we behold many a noble and esteemed spirit glide from our side into the gloom of death with scarcely any perceptible pang!—there are many to supply the vacancy; and the loss is not felt when the need is scarcely known. How different is it when the storm and the peril of adversity assail our courage, and teach us the value of fellowship! To lose then a single heart on which we can rely, is to sustain a bereavement only the more bitter, from its intimate connection with self!—and more acute from the irreparable nature of the loss, and that tendency of the heart to softness and affection which affliction brings in its train!

"Have you saved him?—Where is he?—Is he hurt?" anxiously demanded Mainstay, as Toggle returned to the quarter-deck, his features plainly expressing the grief that was struggling in his heart.

"Saved him!" repeated Toggle. "No!—I wish to God we had!—No! poor fellow!—He's gone!—Lost!—I saw him sink!"

"Saw who sink?" asked Fidget, coming forth half a step from his place of shelter.

"Poor Llewellyn, sir! He had jumped into the mizen-chains to clap a tackle on the maintopsail-yardarm for the raft, and the first sea washed him overboard!"

"He always *was* a very rash officer," was the only reply.

The eyes of poor Toggle seemed absolutely to flash fire at this cruel and heartless aspersion of one, whose wish to repair the faults of his superior had just cost him his life.

"It was not *his* rashness, at any rate, Captain Fidget," returned the first lieutenant, in a voice half choked with rage. "It was not *his* rashness, at any rate, Captain Fidget, that lost us the frigate!"

Fidget felt the keenness of the rebuke, and, pretending not to have heard it, slunk back to his original post; while, as there is always a toady at hand to suck the venom from the just wounds of tyrants, a thin, squeaking, but well-known voice chimed in with—

"Poor young man, he had a very fine *kit*—one of the finest kits I think I ever saw in the service; but I doubt its quite ruined by this time."

Toggle turned at this most apposite apostrophe towards the quarter from whence the voice proceeded, and there, crouching at Fidget's elbow, was seen the purser, his peaky long nose and lips looking as like the back of a mackarel as the face of a human being, so blue and livid and speckled in their colour.

"A very proper idea for an old Jew clothesman," muttered Toggle, turning away, and resuming the duties of the ship, while the purser, supremely indifferent whose feelings he outraged, provided only that those of "The Captain" were propitiated, proceeded to make further application of that "lip salve," in return for the balmy unctuousness of which, the administrator was allowed to plunder the crew and crown *ad libitum*.

To the reader, who had before seen him watching the overflowing gunroom, and is aware of the strong attraction which it possessed

"in the bosom of its deep," some explanation of his appearance on deck is necessary.

While he still stood irresolute by the waters of Babylon, mourning, grieving, resolving, and repenting in one breath—to dive or not to dive!—who should come to his assistance but his devil in all iniquity! —the purser's steward—his own peculiar and familiar! This man already had some knowledge touching the specie in his cabin—he also knew the *locale* of his master's den to the utmost nicety—the drawer where he insisted on disodourating himself and brother officers to death, by keeping an unholy horde of tallow candles, to deal them out by twos and threes—and all the other peculiar whereabouts of the place. To his steward, then, as an excellent swimmer, he unloaded his bosom of his perilous stuff; and though the creature was crafty and lucre-loving, and would not duck and dive for mere affection of his master, as the said master wished him to do, yet they agreed, after much haggling, that the steward should go a-diving for the treasure, and receive as his reward one hundred pounds. The purser then gave him the necessary keys and directions, and after nearly achieving the death of the steward by his repeated immersions, the gold, which was contained in a small iron box—with the key of which the purser would *not* part—was safely dragged to the maindeck by the purser's hands —the steward having affixed the end of a gun-tackle fall to its handle.

The diver well knowing his lord, was now clamourous that his pearl should be taken out of the oyster; but this the purser, with a show of the greatest horror, indignation, and surprise, declared to be quite impossible.

"The key of the iron box was in a little purse, which was in the secret drawer of his desk, which was in the bottom of his chest, which was in the after bread-room—as you well know."

"But the box might be so easily broken open," said the steward.

"What! and lose all the gold!" returned the purser, "which, *of course*, was all loose. No! as soon as they got safely on shore, and were at their ease, *then*, indeed, he, the purser, would do it with much pleasure."

"But the danger," quoth the steward, "of carrying such a heavy lump of treasure—it might slip or fall overboard, or the purser himself might meet some accident."

"Impossible again." Now that the purser once had his grip upon the coin, "he felt," he said, "as secure as if a boat were waiting alongside to take him to the point at Plymouth." Finally, he begged the steward not to be at all uneasy, and was moving to the quarter-deck.

"Well, sir," said the familiar, becoming desperate, "give me your keys, and I'll go down and get your desk up—only let me make fast this tackle as a clue to get back from the bread-room by."

The purser gave up his keys—pointed out every particular—the steward made fast his "*clue*"—and down he plunged once more.

The wary old Nipcheese grinned horribly as he saw him disappear, looked cautiously round for a minute or two, to see that he was not watched, then slyly and rapidly unfastening the "clue" of his familiar, dropped the end of it into water over the gunroom, and stole swiftly back to the quarter-deck. No doubt, the purser thought he had done an exceedingly clever trick; getting down on his knees behind a gun to windward, forth came a little highly-polished key from his bosom, where it was worn, fastened by a watchguard, round his throat. In an instant, like the touch of magic, it opened the little iron box, and there, closely packed together, were seen thirteen small canvass dumplings, each sealed and tied, and containing one hundred guineas.

Looking suspiciously round him, to see that no eye observed, the purser, with the dexterity of an Indian juggler, whipped one or two into one pocket, some more into another, and so on, until all were disposed of about his person. With many a sigh, he then gazed at the empty box—shook his head again and again—advanced it towards one of the gun-ports—drew it back, and sighed, and shook his head again. It was an old friend—it had kept much cash for him in times past—it was his own property—belonging neither to the crown nor to the crew; therefore it was hard to part with it—nay to *waste* it. The thought was dreadful! Yet it could be no use! They must be wrecked! and if that rascally steward should ever find his way up from the bread-room, it might be seen, and tell tales. Yes; it must go overboard! Already it trembled on the port-sill, when some sudden thought struck the owner, and he drew it back. Admirable idea! A shot case was close at hand; breaking open a cannister of grape, he quickly filled his box with the iron bullets, and locking it, once more left it where it was, and walked under the captain's lee.

In a few minutes he saw his steward come rushing up from the maindeck, open mouthed and furious, to look for and denounce him. With admirable acting, he walked up to the poor familiar, and having asked with much apparent anger what had kept him so long, demanded his keys.

"Keys, sir!" replied the steward. "The devil himself could't get them!—The bread-room's choked up with sand!"

"I thought so," responded the purser; "and since that's the case, you'll just," sinking his voice to a most confidential whisper, "take the trouble of carrying the money-box yourself, for my arms are tired already."

"Oh, certainly, sir!" replied the familiar, all his suspicions vanishing on the moment. "Where is it?"

"Here," said the purser, leading the way to the box, which the steward incontinently took upon his arm, and proceeded, under the strictest injunction of the purser, to carry with as much care, tenderness, and solicitude, as if it contained the young Shiloh!

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

### THE LAUNCH OF THE RAFT, AND FURTHER HISTORY.

By this time, the first lieutenant, aided by the strenuous exertions of Mainstay, Prestone, and others of the crew, had completed the raft in the manner originally proposed; and all that remained to be effected, was the launching of it. This was no easy task; but each succeeding moment rendered it the more imperative, as the incessant action of the heavy sea upon the frigate tore from her first one portion and then another, until it became a very doubtful question how much longer her hull would hold together at all. In addition to the weakening effects of the storm, the steps taken to rip up her forecastle-deck, and saw out as many carlings (small beams) as possible for the raft, had reduced the forepart of the vessel to a mere skeleton; and as every fresh sea struck her, the seams yawned in every direction, leaving the once-firm oakum with which they were caulked protruding, and giving easy access to the water to complete the work of destruction.

The plan, so ingeniously devised by Prestone, for making the raft as buoyant as possible, by covering it with canvass, had by his own personal exertions and risk been carried into complete effect. After incredible labour and danger, he had headed several of the other seamen in dragging from the lower-deck several spare sails which had been frapped and lashed both below and above the spars, timbers, and gratings, which now composed their only ark; and in addition to the increased safety which it gave in preventing the feet of its passengers from slipping between its unsteady materials, it not only repressed the water from bubbling up through their interstices, but bound the whole together in a manner which nothing else could have effected, and thus enabled the whole, for the longest possible time, to resist the severe ordeal of the waves to which it was to be exposed.

Satisfied at length that every exertion nad been made, Toggle took a final inspection of their work, as it rested like an awning on the quarter-deck, and then gave the command to pipe "All hands launch raft!"

In obedience to the order, the pipe was given.

"Now, my boys," said Toggle, "each of you steady yourself by these bearing gags," handing out the ends of the remaining gear, which was made fast to the various cleaks to windward, in regular rows, so that the seamen holding these in their hands, stood file after file across the quarter-deck, their heads and shoulders bent under the heavy mass they were to heave up by the force of their exhausted bodies. "Watch the time as the seas strike us to windward, and the ship heels over, to prize up and launch the raft bodily over the lee-quarter!—I'll give the word!—Don't be in a hurry, and take your places!"

Cheerfully at the word, the poor fellows got under their burden, and took their stations in separate ranks; not a man on board but gave his mite of assistance to the arduous duty, and even the women, too, rose at the word, to place their shoulders to the task—but this the men would not permit. Two beings alone, in male garb, contented themselves with idly looking on—Fidget and the purser. Toggle looked at them for a moment, as if expecting, and indeed hoping, that the captain would seize that opportunity, the last that could be afforded him, of reinstating himself in some portion of his crew's esteem. But he neither stirred, nor offered to stir. The temper of the first lieutenant could not tamely endure this, and he called out—

"Purser, sir, come here and do your duty!"

He then placed the miserable Nipcheese where he might add his shoulders to the lift, and turning his back in contempt on his superior, called to him two of the women from aft, who were noted for their strength and having often been at sea before, he placed in their hands the hawsers, which were to bring the raft alongside again after it was launched, saying—"Here, old girls, see that these run clear from their coils, and take care of your hands. And now, men," taking his own station to heave with the rest, "one and all of us heave with a will. Here she goes!—Heave!—so!—Now heave again!—so!—Now—now the sea strikes her!—Heave again!—Bravo!"—as the raft began gradually to slide over the quarter—"So, once more!—hurrah! my heroes!—she's nearly amidships!—one more and she floats!—Now—now with a will!—so!—Hurrah!"

At this moment, when the raft was just balanced, one of those heavy waves that had made such cruel sport of them during the whole of the past morning, poured its whole volume of dark-green sea upon the decks of the frigate. But the precaution of the steadying guys enabled each man to stand firm. With the fiercest impetuosity, the surging mass rolled, broke, and bubbled over them, till meeting in the lee-bulwark an obstacle that turned the current of its fury, the confined water dashed upwards with a strength that nothing could resist, against the bottom of the raft. It trembled for an instant, as if about to fly into innumerable splinters, and then, with a heavy surge, plunged into the mass of surf and foam to leeward, striking the water up in a sudden jet for many feet, and temporarily disappearing from the view.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" involuntarily broke forth from the gladdened lips of the seamen.

"The hawsers!—man the hawsers!" was heard in Toggle's voice; and taking these from the hands of the women, the dark mass on which they had been so long and so patiently labouring, appeared itself, amidst the glittering foam, a short distance to leeward of the frigate, and was gradually brought within a few yards of the ship's broadside, like some vast prey of the whalers, which only waited its last disposal.

But though the chief difficulties of this undertaking seemed mastered, there yet remained considerable danger to be surmounted. For if the raft, though afloat, had come in collision with the sides of the wreck, strongly as it was put together, it would have been unable to

withstand the collison. To keep it, then, at a safe distance, and yet so near that those who were to escape by its assistance might yet embark, was the object to be attained. The former part of this was effected by the drifting of the sea, and to surmount the latter, a whip was with great difficulty got on the mainyard by Prestone, who, as usual, was foremost in volunteering this dangerous service, and the end being handed down, the first man who ventured on the unsteady fabric floating below, was put in a sling, and hoisted aloft by his comrades with a guy, or bearing line, attached to the lowermost block. Then, watching the opportunity, he was gradually lowered, until, having a secure footing, he made fast the end of a kind of stay, which also came down from the same yard, and which was to assist the descent of the rest.

No sooner had this man, who was the boatswain's mate, reached the raft in safety, obeyed the directions given to him, and signified by his pipe that everything was ready for proceeding with the embarkation, than Fidget presented himself as the next in precedence, for whose safety the greatest care was to be had.

On recognizing the person of their captain, nothing could exceed the uproar with which they received this tacit appeal to their care, by the fatal cause of all their sufferings. Cries of "Back!—Back!—Stand off!—Shame!—Shame!" were raised and repeated in the fiercest tones, and with the utmost confusion, while three or four of the stoutest seamen gathering round, actually hustled him back on the quarter-back, where it was impossible he could further interfere—plainly telling him in no measured or agreeable manner, that he had contributed no labour or skill in helping them—that he ought to be the last whose safety was consulted—and that he would be very lucky if they took him off at all. In vain he stormed, swore, threatened, and called on the first lieutenant to interfere.

Toggle essayed to bring the seamen to what he termed "a sense of their duty," but it was useless. They only replied by seizing him, Toggle, by force and unawares, thrusting him into the slings, and before he could alter their choice, whipping him up into the air, and lowering him down. They then called out for Prestone, but he had not yet returned from his dangerous duty aloft; nor did he seem at all anxious to avail himself of the grateful remembrance which they thus showed of his readiness to assist in the general safety, and indeed point out the means of attaining it.

In Prestone's absence they seized on Mainstay, who, with his usual imperturbable good-nature, quietly submitted to their anxieties for his preservation, and was duly transported to the raft. They now called out to those who had already been lowered, to look out for the women, and one after another, with some slight screaming and agitation, the whole of these poor creatures, with one exception, were also safely rescued from the dangers of the wreck. One alone resolutely refused the offer; she crouched among her wet blankets at the stern, declaring that her husband and child had perished, that life now possessed no value for her, and that she preferred the risks of the frigate to the suf-

ferings of the raft; thus they at last permitted her to have her own way, thinking that her intention would alter at the last.

But though hope had led them to have recourse to that which seemed the only chance of safety, their new position had many and frightful privations. Drenched to the skin, without food or drink—the pitiless seas and surf breaking over them at every moment, with no bulwark to prevent their being washed overboard at any instant—their fingers so benumbed and frosted as to render them all but useless—the only prospect of rescue being that of getting first drifted and then dashed on an unknown shore—the day already fast drawing to a close, and evening setting in with no appearance of the storm abating—how intensely strong in the human heart must the love of life be, which could tempt some hundred and fifty beings to struggle through all these disadvantages for the sweets of a French prison and the horrors of slavery!

At last the embarkation was accomplished. Three living beings alone remained on the decks of the Nero—Captain Fidget, Prestone, and the poor woman astern. Prestone held the hawser of the raft; making this fast for a few moments, he ran aft once more to urge her embarkation on the unhappy female, saying, as he went, to Fidget—

"Will you come aft, sir, and help me to bring her forward. Let us put her on the raft at any rate; she'll thank us afterwards, if not now."

"No, no, sir," replied Fidget; "let her do as she likes. If you waste much more time with such fooleries, they'll shove off without us."

And while Prestone went on his errand of humanity, the captain employed himself in arranging the slings on his own person. But though at a distance, the crew of the raft were by no means unobservant, and seeing how he was engaged, began shouting furiously—"Prestone first—Prestone first!" for they had seen the object with which the latter had gone aft.

Of these cries the captain at first took no notice, until they were followed by others of still stronger significancy.

"You shan't come here till Prestone's safe! Take those slings off! You shan't come here till Prestone's safe!"

Though these shouts were very indistinctly heard, yet the hootings and gestures were perfectly intelligible; and Prestone, being unable to alter the intentions of the poor woman at the taffrail, came back to tell Fidget that he, Prestone, would never desert a wreck on which a poor woman was left to perish, and that he therefore chose to remain; but if Fidget chose to go, he would lower him down at once.

"Oh, certainly!" cried Fidget, seating himself in the slings forthwith, without any further attention to the crew below, who resumed their shouts and cries with greater violence than before.

To these Prestone paid no attention—he hoisted aloft the captain, and, determined that there should be no return, undid with the other hand a turn of the hawser which held the raft, and then rapidly lowered away the captain.

The crew not understanding what was meant, and attributing what

they saw to some unheard tyrannical order of their officer, no sooner saw him being lowered amongst them, than with one accord they lifted up their arms, and pushed the pendant weight away. Prestone, unaware of their intention, lowered away at the same time, to ship him safely on the raft, and the united result of both these actions, was to plunge the unhappy object of them into the boiling surf. Eager to repair the mischief, Prestone now hoisted away the tackle once more, but this Fidget had in his fright let go, and was soon struggling among the waves for a life which none of his late crew evinced the least desire to assist him in retaining.

With a devotion too rarely evinced in this life, Prestone seized a rope's-end from the main-chains, knotted it round his own body with incredible dexterity, and jumping close down by Fidget, dragged the insensible body to the gangway, transferred the rope's-end to Fidget's waste, regained the frigate himself, and then pulled up its insensible captain.

But great was the sacrifice. When he once more looked towards his late shipmates, he saw that the loosened hawser had slipt from the cleat where it had been fast, the strain on the raft had drawn the end overboard, and the raft itself was now drifted irrecoverably to leeward. The crew on board were making various signs, inviting him to plunge after them; and for a moment human nature seemed to suggest the act. In the next his eye fell on the poor woman crouching at the taffrail, and the abject being extended at his feet. The nobler spirit triumphed. With a deep sigh he turned inboard, and gave his preference to die in the execution of the generosities of life, rather than live by the desertion of them.

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## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH.

### WOMAN'S REMEMBRANCES—HER GRATITUDE AND RETALIATION.

The choice was made—the determination taken. As Prestone watched the gradual gliding away from his sight the congregation of his unhappy shipmates, it seemed as if the ebbing of life—the departure of existence, was no longer an illusion of theory, a subject of discussion—a matter of metaphor, but one of those cold stern realities with which the sorrowful existence of man is crowded.

Now a gigantic wave bent over them its threatening hollow—now a mass of froth and foam swept in their fury on its shrinking numbers—now their dark arms were seen tossing on high, in frenzy, despair, or imprecation—now not even the stunning crashes of the frigate as she struck, or the blast of the tempest as it howled over her, stilled the agonizing shrieks of those who gradually drifted towards the land, and left him to perish—alone!—No! even that amelioration of his misery was denied him. By his side stood a being, who, from his position, ought to have commanded his

respect. Now in the last excesses of horror and madness, he plucked the hair by handfuls from his forehead, or vented curses more fearful than the scene that called them forth, or threw himself upon the deck, and once more relapsed into that state of seeming senselessness from which he had lately recovered.

How different was the conduct of the poor woman at the stern. She, like Prestone, appeared to view the approach of death as the coming of a much misrepresented friend, of whose evil we have many misgivings, but of whose certain relief no doubt can be entertained.

For an instant his eye fell once more upon the raft—it was the last time that he caught anything like a clear view of it; and then, threatened on all sides, he beheld a long rolling breaker pour its whole fury on the devoted mass—and too distinctly visible, he beheld one or more beings swept overboard from its frail protection into the all-devouring sea. One alone seemed to make an effort to save some sinking wretch, but it was in vain; and shuddering at the sight, yet drawing from it, horrible as it was, some consolation under the choice he had made, he turned aft to address some words of consolation to the poor sufferer astern.'

Could he have known at the time who it was who thus sank never to rise more!—who it was who made the effort to save him, and the bitter history attached to both, how much of disgust would have mingled with his horror!

Laden with gold, as we have already described, the purser had seated himself at one end of his new ark, in order that he might be among the first to land. Wholly without the skill of those poor sailors, whom it had been the aim of his whole life to pillage, he observed not that at the same moment he gave himself one of the most exposed positions. Unshipped by the first wave that struck him fairly, he was no sooner left to struggle for his life, than the weight of specie on his person carried him to the bottom, with his ill-gotten wealth, like a shot; while his equally honest steward, who had forced his strong-box with no very creditable intention, and was thus fully aware of his master's cheat, and only watching an opportunity of out-manœuvring his superior, saw all his schemes swallowed by the accident, and made an involuntary and fatal attempt to avert it. But enough of these blots on the page of nature. In a few seconds Prestone's eye could no longer trace his shipmates amid the surf; and nothing now diverted his attention from giving that calm meeting to death in his own person which most became his conduct, character, and life.

The unhappy woman, who in her despair had made the seemingly hopeless choice of the frigate, was still young, and bore the traces of former comeliness. Wrapt up in some saturated blankets, she laid in the corner formed to windward by the signal locker and the ship's side, scarcely evincing any signs of life, except now and then a slight shudder, as some sea more furious than another washed over her. Poor Prestone, wearied and exhausted as he was to the last degree, could still feel the liveliest compassion for her, and going below on the maindeck, to forage for any article of food that could be found, he

entered the cabin, and discovered some wine in the bottom of a bottle, and the remains of a loaf of bread soaked with salt water. These were the only remains of the captain's larder left by the midshipmen, and after vainly endeavouring to find some further means of sustenance, he carried these on deck.

Going up to the woman, Mary Howarth, who, from living with her husband in the mess next his own, he remembered to have seen during the only hasty meal of which he had ever partaken on board the ill-fated Nero, he gently raised her from the half lethargic posture into which she had fallen, and asked her to take part of the provisions he had discovered. At first, she utterly refused; but after some entreaty consented to take a portion of the wine. Prestone having generously made her swallow two-thirds of this, then took half of the remainder. Parched as he was by the quantity of spray and salt water which he had swallowed in the course of his exertions during the day, he thought as he drank the wine how utterly impossible it must be for those who have never known such extremity, to fancy the exquisite enjoyment of that moment. Delicious, however, as was the draught, and great as was the self-denial required to abandon it, he still checked himself in its enjoyment, to reserve for the captain a somewhat larger portion than his own. Thus doled out, but little fell to the share of either. As for Fidget, as little improved by his adversity as fools generally are, he no sooner beheld the capture made by Prestone, than he demanded from what quarter of the ship it came; and ascertaining this to be his own cabin, sharply reprimanded the man who, but a brief space before, had saved his life at the peril of its preserver's, for daring to *steal* his goods, and not bringing them directly to him. Snatching at both wine and bread, he greedily swallowed the former, and with equal voracity proceeded to satiate his hunger with the miserable apology for bread. Having devoured the far greater portion of it with the ferocity of a famished wolf, he gave the rest to Prestone. Exhausted as the latter was, he received the offering without remark, determining in his own mind, that as Fidget was still determined to maintain the superior officer, he, Prestone, should content himself with yielding him that rank, and merging in it the more tender kindnesses of the companion in misery.

By this time evening had approached, and the wreck began to show undeniable proof of the fury of the seas that for so long a period had been beating over it. The stern, in particular, which presented towards the sea, had suffered most severely; and the cabin windows being long since demolished, the seas beat in through the main deck, and was rapidly starting all the quarter-deck planks. As it was now incumbent on the hapless trio who remained on board to choose some resting-place for the night, Prestone contrived to cut from the hammock-nettings sufficient tarpauline to rig a rude hurricane-house between the fore-bitts; and seeing that during the night the stern must infallibly be shattered to pieces, even if the rest of the ship survived, he, by the last exertion of his remaining strength, carried forward Mary Howarth, and laid her there under shelter; and point-

ing out this last refuge to Fidget, who instantly availed himself of it, he also flung himself beneath its shelter, to die in peace.

Wearied with the horrors of the day, they all fell asleep, and when Fidget next awoke, the wind, though still blowing a heavy gale, had lost somewhat of its violence; and the moon, which was nearly full, shone brightly on their misery, though the sea beat on the deck with nearly as much violence as ever, and constant sheets of water dashed on their tarpauline covering, and running down its sides, trickled underneath their shivering and nearly senseless bodies.

Without a moment considering that sleep was now the greatest blessing in their power, and that consequently the deprivation of it almost the greatest cruelty that could be inflicted, he at once awoke poor Prestone, telling him that he was suffering the greatest agonies of thirst, and imploring him to go below and see if he could procure some fresh water. To this Prestone replied by assuring his commander that it was an utter impossibility—that he had made the effort the last time he went below; and that, moreover, the main deck was now not safe for any one to venture—that the sea was washing through it with the utmost violence at every surge; and guns, shot, and a multitude of other matters adrift on it, which would infallibly maim and destroy any one adventuring on such a task. But this assurance did not suffice—order, threat, and entreaty were all essayed in vain. For half an hour Fidget would lie down and try to sleep—then starting up again in renewed agony, would again go over the same ground with equal want of success. This was renewed four or five times, till at last Prestone, lifting his head, said, with more asperity than he had before exhibited—

"Do you imagine that your anguish, or thirst, or suffering, is greater than either mine or that of the poor creature who lies beside us? Yet you see we bear it. Then in the name of heaven do the same. Lie down and try to sleep—or at least let us do so. It is our only chance of life, and if we live till morning, God in mercy may send some sail to take us off; if not, we had better spend our time in preparing for a death that no grieving can—"

A choking gurgling noise was heard in Prestone's throat as he came to the last word, and before he could complete the sentence, he fell back senseless on the deck.

"Good God! he's dead!" shrieked Fidget, in those weak but shrill tones of nervous excitement which was all the utterance his burning thirst still left him.

"Dead!" repeated Mary Howarth, who had hitherto appeared asleep, and starting up at the same moment and lifting the drooping head upon her lap, she added—"No—he's not dead—not dead, but faint from thirst; but this will revive him—my poor babe's little supper had he lived."

Tears gushed from her eyes at the memory of her drowned child, and all the woman's tenderness revived in her breast, as bending gently over the handsome but death-like features of poor Prestone, she lifted his cold but arid mouth to her bosom, and bestowed on the object of her regard that nourishment by which nature compensates the mother

for all those pangs that bless her with a child. At this moment, Fidget had partially drawn aside the tarpauline, to let the moonlight fall on Prestone's features, to ascertain how far he was right in the conjecture of his death. With the utmost distinctness, therefore, he beheld the devotion exhibited towards him by their companion in misery. Rushing forward with a cry of joy, he seized the woman's arm—

"Not on him!—not on him!—He is dead, I tell you!—Why throw away the means of life on a dead man?—Think of me!—I am living! —I am the captain!—It is my right to be saved first!"

"You!" exclaimed the bereaved mother, stretching out her arm, and speaking with a degree of unexpected energy, that perfectly startled the object to whom it was addressed. "*You!* save *you!*— A curse, I say, on the woman who ever bore, much less she who could ever save, you! If there was not another one in the world to save, I wouldn't! though that's not the case now, you heartless flint! for, mark my words, the man who lies before us, faint as he may be, has a longer life than yours! so come not nigh me, if you wouldn't wish to feel the weight of a woman's arm that has beat you once before, when you were both a stronger and a younger man than ever you will be again!"

"Beat me once before! you lying she devil! where did I ever see you before, much less get struck by you?"

"It's easy to do wrong and forget it, but not so easy to suffer and forget. Where you first saw me, was where I never knew a sorrow till I saw the evil omen of your face, and since then ill luck has never left me! so, for fear you should die without remembering all the evil of your life, I'll tell one portion of it. Just take the trouble to remember, will you, when you were officer of a pressgang in the Downs? Aye, I see so long a time hasn't passed but you remember it. So, perhaps, you have not yet forgotten coming to my mother's cottage in disguise, to beg a drink of water, wheedling out of the old woman that her husband was in hiding, and breaking in on us, at daylight, a short time afterwards, and dragging him off to sea. Perhaps you may remember leaving my sister fainting on the floor, while I clung upon your arm, praying you, for the love of heaven, to let my father go; or, having neglected all our tears, perhaps you may not quite forget the double trick you next played upon my mother's folly and despair. You smile!—I wish you joy of any satisfaction in recalling how, under hope of having back my father, you got her to tell you the hiding place of some younger men—broke in upon them by force, as before—carried off my husband among them—and then, instead of releasing my father, sent them all to sea—while, to crown your cruelty, you have this day wantonly drowned both my husband and my son by your obstinacy! and now ask me to save *your* life that has caused so much misery to mine! No! God forbid that I should wish any fellow-creature's death! but if your hour is at hand, don't turn for safety to the bosom of a woman you have rendered fatherless, childless, and a widow!"

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

### WHICH RETURNS TO OUR HERO.

In the reign of the Caliph Haroun Alraschid, Commander of the Faithful—the great patron of all novelists and other story-tellers—there flourished in Bagdad an eminent professor of our art—Ali Ben Lillykt Ruth. Now the Vicar of the Prophet had often been accustomed to regale himself, when in disguise, on the oral but perpetual feasts spread at will by the fertile imagination of Ali; and being possessed, as most vicars think they should be, of the great tithes as well as the small—in short, the ways and means—he offered unto Ali a handsome pension, to transfer to imperishable tablets one of the best of those tales which the romancist had been in the habit of narrating. Tempted by the reward, Lillykt Ruth complied with his sovereign's wish, and addressed himself with proportionate ardour to the task.

In his great anxiety, however, to acquit himself with all honour, he stretched—to borrow the painter's expression—so large a canvass, and covered it at starting with so many figures, that ere he had progressed beyond the few first stages of his tale, he had two thousand and three characters all at work, and each individual in such a dilemma, that it might have puzzled Job, with all his wide experience, to suggest any sorrows that should more distress, or any credible device that should relieve them. Now when Ben Ali had arrived at this happy consummation, he put a long dash at the end of the manuscript, and then dutifully laid it before the Commander of the Faithful. Mahommed's vicegerent having attentively perused the same with considerable avidity, supposed that this was only the first portion, and eagerly inquired for the remainder. Flinging himself at Haroun Alrashid's feet, and lifting his hands above his head—

"Oh, king! live for ever!" replied Ali Ben, who had got an unfortunate habit of never stumbling on truth, even by accident, "as my soul liveth," continued he in the same strain, "there is no more. The tale is finished, and the story is told."

"Finished!" repeated the Caliph, "how can that be, when the whole breaks off in the middle?"

"Those, sire, if your slave may say so, are notions that rather suited the days of the Preadamite sultans than these enlightened times. Stories should be moulded solely according to the interests. Your majesty's eye, like the beam of the morning sun, which opens all that is most beautiful, has doubtless ere this perceived, that each of my characters is in such a hobble, that I cannot make them any worse, nor your majesty any better. Now, as the interest of the story never can be half so perfect as at present, your slave thinks, with your majesty's permission, that it had better be left there."

What was the reply of the Commander of the Faithful to this cogent

reasoning of his celebrated novelist, history, with her usual negligence on all vital questions, has neglected to inform us. But the force of this great moral lesson still remains to us intact—so much so, that were the records of "PAUL PERIWINKLE" a mere work of fiction, his humble memorialist would feel obliged, seeing the "fix" into which all the characters have got, to leave them there. This is not so, however; and the matter recorded in these pages being facts of the most serious reality, they must be told to the end. And here duty suggests the fairness of returning for a time to those matters with which we left one of the leading objects of this memoir involved —Paul Periwinkle himself.—

The sun had risen, and was in the first burst of beauty—an exquisite pink tinge suffused the whole sky, and in the westernmost quarter one or two of the last stars might be seen growing more and more faint with every advancing moment. The chorus of innumerable voices—small but sweet—bore testimony to the joy of the winged tribes. A cool and delicious breeze swept over the surface of the earth, and seemed singing its part in the general anthem, as it passed along, mingling the perfume of a thousand flowers, and the honied sweets of every herb. The cattle, depastured through the night upon the plains, tossed their heads aloft to snuff the grateful air. The labourer, as he sought his work, forgot the drowsy prayer for further slumber in the renewed spirits of the hour; and even the shy trout shot forth to feed, with renewed appetite and increased daring. Joy, and life, and freshness, appeared in everything. Could there be grief, or sorrow, or dismay, at such a time, and amid such a scene?

At a window that commanded all we have attempted to describe, stood an old man, who had just risen from his pillow. Nothing could more truly express the combined feelings of deep agony and resignation than his features, as his eyes wandered over the prospect before him, or were turned towards the heaven above. His lips seemed moving with that convulsive and involuntary action, which is so frequently the result of suppressed sufferings—now framing the sorrower's thoughts in prayer—now unable to refrain from the impatient bursts of pain.

"This, then, is the day!" said the old man, after a brief pause; "the day of woe, humiliation, and despair! Who would think so to look at it! We complain of the world! but what can be more beautiful, if man would but be content to enjoy it?"

For some minutes his eyes continued to rove over the various features of the landscape. Then pursuing his reflections—

"But what can be more vain than grief. Every assizes, those old hills have witnessed the same calm in heaven—the same turmoil, shame, and remorse here! Thousands have suffered, and now how sound their sleep! A brief space more, and all my sufferings too, will be hushed in the same slumber. To endure is better than to grieve—"

At this moment the rattle of a gig was heard under the window, and a vehicle of that description made its appearance, drawn by a

fine strong iron-gray mare, and driven by the knight of the old breeches —worthy Mr. Wrynecker.

"Good morning, Sir Job!" said Two Shoes, standing up and saluting the Periwinkle patriarch at the window, who seeing his friend below, threw up the casement. "I thought, Sir Job," continued Wrynecker, "I'd just call round and see if you'd like an early drive for an hour, when no one's stirring. The exercise will do you good, and enable you to stand the—the—" fatigues of the day he meant, but his good-natured heart would not allow him to finish the allusion; so breaking off, he resumed—"I always take a rattle before breakfast myself during 'sizes—it's the only time in the day I can manage to steal an hour or two for health. The air in those cursed courts would very soon finish me else. Won't you come, Sir Job? You'd better.—Do, if you can! Trust an old stager like me for giving you the best advice—just try it! The air has a sort of live-for-ever kind of feeling that's quite delightful!"

Sir Job shook his head in reply, and then added—

"Thank you, my good friend; your advice and offer are both excellent, but I think an hour's sleep, if I can get it, will be still more beneficial."

And indeed, when Wrynecker looked at the haggard countenance of his client, he could not but feel shocked at the ravages grief had made there; and assenting to his proposition, said he would be back by eight, and drove off.

"Now," said Wrynecker, "since we are to have a solitary drive, we'll have a rattler. I'll just cut off to ———,"—distant about fourteen miles—"have a jolly breakfast at the George—they always give good breakfasts at the George—and back again by eight; that'll just do, without distressing my mare," and off set Mr. Wrynecker. In passing Dick Doubtful's lodgings, however, he looked up; the faint glimmering of a kind of light, and the apparition of some figure fumbling at the window from within, induced old Leather-breeches to pause. Scarcely had he done so, when up flew the window, and forth flew Dick Doubtful's head, his eyes red and bloodshot, his neckcloth cast aside, and his whole appearance that of a man who had not retired to rest, while on the table lay a huge brief, unrolled before the arm chair, its last two or three pages fluttering in the delicious morning breeze, while the pair of candles, one on each side, ran guttering down the socket, and were flaring from the draught. These, with the inkstand-dish, pens, and a heap of hieroglyphed papers, all told the tale of Dick's devotions.

"Why, bless my soul—bless my soul, how's this! Why, I declare it's absolutely morning!" said Dick, staring about him in as much surprise as if day-break only came once a week.—"Why, is that you, Mr. Wrynecker? Oh, I see! I hope you're quite well this morning, Mr. Wrynecker."

"Quite well, Mr. Doubtful, thank you; how are you, sir? Why, you're up betimes, sir, and to business, I see, like me."

"Oh, upon my word, Mr. Wrynecker, you give me too much cre-

dit!—Oh, upon my word, you do!—for the truth is, I've not been able to find time to get to bed yet; for our case, you see, comes on the first thing to-morrow morning, so I thought I could put off the sleep till after the trial; and now, deuce take it! I've got such a toothache, I hardly know what to do. But no matter.—No, no; you see there are two or three very nice points in this case. First, you see—but, perhaps, you could just step up here for a few minutes?"

"Why, really, thank you, Mr. Doubtful," replied Wrynecker, who knew, by sad experience, what sort of things Dick's "nice points" were; and that the mere touching on one at the window, would infallibly lose him his morning's ride. "Why, really, thank you, Mr. Doubtful; I should be most happy—much obliged to you for your kind offer—but this little mare o' mine, you see, like most of the women folk, the least shadow of neglect sets her heckle up instanter, and I should no sooner get my foot off the iron, than away she'd bolt at a venture—a devilish deal less likely to reach home than Halifax, I assure you, sir. You see, sir, even now," giving her a saw with the bit, and a cut on her flank, that made her rear and snort; "you see, even now, she wont stand here quiet any longer, and I shall be back at eight."

"Then, pray, don't stop now. Oh, upon my word! that horse seems very dangerous. Isn't it rather a nice point to drive him?" replied Dick, retiring from the window, with as much knowledge of horse flesh as of baby's teething.

"Now," said Dick, as Wrynecker's gig drove off, and addressing the empty arm-chair, with as much gravity as if it had been filled by the principal of his college, "*there's* one of your *con*-founded fools for you—there's an attorney, now, who's got a capital client—one of his best clients—whose son is to be tried for murder in a few hours!—the client an intimate friend, too, and no expence spared—no remuneration thought too great—yet that *con*-founded fellow can't attend to the case of his client's—of his *friend's* son—because he has a bolting mare, or is going off on some tomfoolery or another!—bolt *him*, I say!—the devil have him!—Well, well!—No matter, no matter!—God help the poor clients, I say, if this is the way attornies do their business! Well, it's no concern of mine; I've done my duty; so now for bed;" and taking off his shoes, and walking and talking some considerable time in his stockings, Dick cheated himself of another hour's sleep, and then went off to his pillow, leaving both candles still alight. Being unable to find his nightcap, because it was laid in its place, where he never thought of looking for it, he walked down stairs to the hall, took his only hat, drew it carefully over his eyes, which he said were always delicate, got into bed, and went fast asleep.

By this time, Wrynecker had arrived at ———, seen his mare taken out, rubbed down, and well fed—bullied the ostler, in his good-humoured way, and given him a pinch of snuff and a morning dram—ordered his breakfast—and commenced his usual harmless flirtation with landlady, barmaids, *et id genus omne*—shared his quart of mighty

ale with the landlord—and declared himself quite ready for breakfast, whenever it should appear. This it soon did, in all anticipated abundance and perfection, and ample justice to it did the worthy Mr. Wrynecker. Just as he was sipping his last cup of coffee, he suddenly paused, and exclaimed with an oath—

"I wonder how that fellow feels after his whipping last night?—A nice figure I must have cut in that ball-room!—A pretty story they'll have against me now, to add to all the others!—in all the county papers, of course!—but, as Mr. Doubtful say, 'no matter!'"

"Your mare's *to*, sir," said the ostler, appearing to interrupt these remembrances.

"Right, Thomas," replied the man of buckskin; and in a few minutes he was on his way back to the "'sizes." Two miles from ———, on Wrynecker's route, is a toll-gate, which does not levy its exactions on any of the regular travellers of the road, but has been placed in that position by the grateful authorities of ———, who, knowing that this is one of the most agreeable drives in their neighbourhood, determined, by this ingenious contrivance, to get out of their confiding visitors the last penny which it was in their power to obtain. Only those, therefore, who start from ——— pay the toll, and the gate is cleared by tickets from all other places. Knowing the beauty of the drive, Wrynecker had determined so to return, as it was little, if anything, longer than the route by which he came, and it yet wanted a quarter to seven o'clock. Just as he drew near the gate, a sudden but heavy cloud obscured the sun, and the rain came down in torrents.

Wholly unexpected, and therefore wholly unprovided against, Wrynecker's wrath rose with every drop that fell. He should be wet through—he should have to change, and there would be no one to look after his breeches! And then he thought of the ball-room scene—and then he thought—which was quite true—that he'd eaten too much breakfast. Altogether, Mr. Wrynecker was getting into a quiet rage.

"'But no matter,' as Mr. Doubtful says, drive hard, and we shall get through all in time."

Unfortunately, however, for Wrynecker, just as he came to this conclusion, and was dashing through the aforesaid gate in haste, to clear it before a long train of carriages with morning invalids—carts with early cabbages—waggons with furniture, and other tender vegetables—came up, a pert, little, "noppety devil," as he afterwards took leave to style her, ran screaming out from the door of the toll-house—

"Stop, stop, I say; where's your ticket, old 'un?"

"Come, old Squaretoes, look sharp," chimed in an early cabbage-man, who was waiting to pass on the other side.

"Bear a hand a-head there, sir, will you?" added Admiral Sharpshins, from his open carriage, in which he carried his gouty toe, and two unmarriageable daughters.

"I say, Sal, make that fellow move on brisk, will 'e?" finally snorted forth the toll-keeper, who was lying snug in bed, distinctly visible to Wrynecker's excited eye.

Never was Leather-breeches in such a rage before! His very heart stood still with astonishment and wrath! Even his favourite mare—his iron-gray—was flung upon her very haunches with surprise! To think that he! *Mr.* Wrynecker! should be thus treated!—assailed at once by a "noppety devil," an early cabbage-man, a gouty admiral with unmarriageable daughters, a lazy scoundrel of a toll-keeper!—to be suspected of cheating a turnpike, and called an "old 'un," "old Squaretoes," and a "fellow," all within a few seconds!—He'd show them who and what he was!—He'd be avenged of all!—He'd let them see how a lawyer *could* do the thing in a peaceable, quiet, constitutional way!

Banishing at once from his ominous brow every trace of his internal feelings, he summoned up his blandest smile and expression, moved his horse forward, so that his gig wheels completely wedged up the narrow gate, which had only been intended for one, he felt in his *waistcoat* pocket that the ticket was really safe, and then quietly putting his whip in its stand, commenced his operation.

"Here, my dear," said he to the "noppety devil" in the ribbons, beckoning her out into the rain; "you asked for the ticket, didn't you?"

"Yes; to be sure I did."

"Well, well; all proper. Wait a moment, my dear; you shall have it."

Putting his hand into his vast right-hand pouch, out came as much as his hand could grasp of the last week's correspondence. With a face as unmoved, and a manner as leisurely, as if sitting at his bureau, he opened first one letter and then another, carefully folding each up again in its proper form—never heeding the pitiless rain, or the oaths and threats poured on him on every side. As soon as one pocket was finished, he began another; and so, with equal indifference, precision, and regularity, went through every scrap of paper, ejaculating every now and then—

"I'm sure I have it—I know I have it, *somewhere*."

"Never mind, sir—go on, sir—never mind—we'll take your word, sir," interrupted the toll-keeper every now and then, from his bed.

"No, no; I insist upon producing my ticket," disclaimed the indignant Wrynecker. "A base suspicion has been cast upon my honour, and its due to myself to clear it up. I know I have it *somewhere;*" and every time old Leather-breeches said this, he commenced anew with his capacious pockets.

There, stood the poor "noppety devil," drenched to the skin, her ribbons and her hair hanging about her like so many rats' tails—there, sat the outrageous and infuriated admiral, in the same dripping predicament, shaking his crutch at Wrynecker, and firing off threats by the thousand, and most unheard-of oaths—there, gathered together, the cabbage-men, and the cow-men, and the waggon-men, and men of many other denominations, entreating, execrating, imploring, objurgating, or remarking, each in his own forcible and peculiar style. There sat the imperturbable Wrynecker, turning over his papers, cool

as ever, feeling every pocket thrice over in its turn, and uttering every few seconds, the same cry—

"I know I have it *somewhere!*"

One or two serious attempts were made, both by the early cabbage-man and the admiral, to dislodge him by force; but in an instant, a long-barrelled horse-pistol was seen flashing in Wrynecker's hand, and the sternest tones of his voice heard exclaiming—

"If any man attacks me or my horse on the King's highway, I shall defend myself and property to the life!"

Seeing that they had got hold of so ticklish a customer, force was now given over; and when Wrynecker saw, by the turnpike clock, that he had kept this farce up for half an hour, that the rain was abating, and his time running short, he put his hand once more into his waistcoat-pocket, and produced the ticket.

"Ah!" cried the old boy, acting his part to admiration, "*this* is it!—*This* is it at last!—I said I had it *somewhere*.—I was sure I must have it *somewhere*."

"Give it me, then, you old plague!" cried the "noppety devil."

"Stay, my dear," replied Wrynecker, as cool as ever; "after so much trouble in finding, 'twould be but a poor compliment to part from it with any precipitation. Is that your name over the door, ma'am?—'Ebenezer Hughes.'—Is that your name?"

"No, you great fool! it's my uncle's. Do *you* intend to keep us here all day?"

"Ma'am, you may stay there for all eternity, if you like! I can't think of showing my ticket to you, now you tell me that's not your name over the door.—That's not in the act, ma'am. Whosoever shall violate an act of parliament, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, you'll find, ma'am, if you'll only look into my Lord Coke—Beecher's case, B. 61. So, be pleased to send out your uncle."

"You be ——!" bawled Ebenezer, from his bed; "I'm not coming out in the rain for you."

"Indeed you are though—but you needn't bring any more oaths with you, sir, than you find absolutely necessary, as I'll fine you five shillings for every one."

With many a savage growl, the sulky "pike" jumped out of bed, thrust on his greatcoat, fastened the two lowest buttons, and with naked feet he paddled through the mud to the gig-side.

"Here give us your infernal ticket, and may every ill luck seize ye, if ever ye darken this pike again."

"Not so fast, Ebenezer—not so fast—I don't give my ticket up to any one. The act only requires me to *show* it, Ebenezer!—only to *show* it! There it is. Now, you may read it or not, just as you're able; and the advice you get by this morning's work, is to attend to your gate yourself, Ebenezer, instead of idling in bed, and sending out such an ignorant noppety devil as that wench yonder."

Smack went the whip—on went iron-gray—and a whole chorus of shouts proclaimed the starting of *the* gig.

"I tell you what it is, you unfeeling pie-a-wau-wau-picked-up-

along-shore-hauberk!" bawled the admiral, as he passed the carriage, "you'll be the death of my poor daughters, if not of myself, into the bargain!"

"No great matter either," roared back Wrynecker, in the same stentorian tone and conciliating feeling. "Go it, little mare!" addressing the last words to iron-gray; and off the beautiful animal trotted, at the pace of some fifteen miles an hour, leaving the war behind her, and Wrynecker nearly convulsed with silent laughter.

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## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

### THE TRIAL.

By the time that Wrynecker got back, had changed his dress, and called on Sir Job, it wanted but a few minutes of nine o'clock, when the court opened; and everything being in readiness, they at once set off. At Dick Doubtful's, things went not quite so placidly. At half past eight the first bugle sounded, as a signal to all whom it might concern, that the business of the day was drawing near. With ears anxiously on the stretch, even in sleep, poor Dick heard the cry of his baby, as Charles called the bugle, and sprang out of bed, feeling literally as much parched from the want of sleep, as if thirst, not weariness, had been the assailing sensation, and liquid and not slumber the sustenance required.

With all the hurry a gentleman can use, the clock struck nine, and the bugles simultaneously poured out their last startling notes by the time that Dick had arrayed himself in the canonical black suit of his profession, and hastily tying on his bands, he marched down into the parlour, to see if he could get a mouthful of breakfast; but there, with still greater haste, had got before him one of the ushers of the court, with his white wand.

"Please, sir, your case is just called on."

"Bless my soul—bless my soul—is it, is it. Run back and say I'm coming.—Say I'll be there directly. Where the devil is my clerk?—Oh, there you are!—Where's my bag?—Where's my brief? Give me my gown. Where are my books?—Now, my wig. Susan, that's a good girl! pour out some tea!—John! button my straps.—Where are those reports I had?—*Con*-fusion!" and away bolted poor Dick, with the refreshment of two hours' sleep to counterbalance twenty-two hours' work; and part of a dish of tea to support the exhaustion of an ill-ventilated court, which, like almost all the rest in England—and London especially—seem made to shorten the lives of a profession, every one of whose pursuits appear kindly moulded with

the same tendency. Thus it is, that unless the most robust physical constitution is added to mental acquirements of no ordinary cast, few men stand much chance of gaining the high places of an order, among which are to be found some of the most ambitious and able of mankind.*

The clerk of arraigns was reading the indictment when Doubtful arrived in court. Taking his seat, as quietly as he could, beside his leaders, the attorney-general, who had been specially retained, and Mr. Botherem, he looked around him. The court was crowded to excess. On the bench were several ladies of the various county families, and in the body of the court two out of three were of the same sex. The supposed cause of the murder being the beautiful Nora Creina, who had been so well known and so widely admired—the singular nature of the case—the youth of the prisoner—and the supposition that some further love relations might come to light, were held to account for this composition of the auditory. At the bar stood our unhappy hero, dressed in mourning, pale as if he had already been a tenant of the frightful tomb, that—figuratively speaking—yawned at his feet, and wearing a look of wretchedness and woe, that smote the heart of the beholders. Severe as his confinement and agony had been, the traces of former manly beauty remained strongly visible; each feature beautifully proportioned as it was, seemed the clearer from the attenuation which had pared down and sharpened every individual

* To this sad truth, Romilly, Gifford, and a host of unknown martyrs, have borne witness; and under our own immediate eyes, even the great acquirements of a Follet have been temporarily made to bear witness. And must this state of things continue? When a bill has just passed to force the dirty to clean their private dwellings, are not common sense and humanity strong enough in this nation, to grant that the pure air of heaven shall at least be breathed in the temples of justice? In all the newly built courts, the Public are admitted in galleries; the Bar, the Witnesses, Prisoners, and subordinate officers, placed in the lowest deep, and the ventilating windows at the top. All the foul air—the carbonic acid gas—which is evolved in considerable quantity at every expiration of the human lung, falls, from its specific gravity, to the bottom; and, had it no kind of escape, would in a few minutes destroy every living thing that inhaled it. By far the greater quantity, it is true, runs off by the doors, passages, and stove-gratings; but much is necessarily breathed in its descent, and has the most poisonous and debilitating effects on life—which truth may be daily seen in brewer's vats and wells, which these courts seem built to imitate—a design most perfectly effected—while, a few years since, at Malta, one hundred and eighty children were all killed by this gas in a few minutes, in the church of San Giovanni.

If this system is to continue, all we say is, thank God that the Queen's counsel and seniors occupy the lowest benches, and in the general slaughter, as in H. M. Service, the juniors will stand the better chance of promotion by death-vacancies. As most of these gentlemen have seats in parliament, we put it to them, whether it is not worth their while to exert their lungs a little *in* the House of Commons, in order to save them *out* of it. Nothing is more simple than the remedy, which is to have large ventilated air-chambers under the floor of each court, with ample communications and numerous ventilators in the walls of the court itself, nearly on a level with the boarding, as well as in the roof. The judges, also, would experience the good results of such a reform, in the diminution of their weariness and sense of fatigue; while the faculties of sight, and—more especially—of hearing, would have a chance of enduring perfect, infinitely longer than any at present afforded them.—Q. E. D. To them, at least, if to no one else, some public compassion ought to be extended, seeing how laborious are their duties, and how patiently they devote themselves to their fulfilment.

line, while the eyes stood forth more largely and prominently than ever, and though shaded by their long fringes, and bent upon the ground, they seemed surcharged with the grief that preyed within, and spoke a mild yet heroic gentleness of mind, that utterly forbade the just observer from deeming him a murderer.

Neither Sir Job Periwinkle nor Charles were in court, but waited in a lobby till their reluctant evidence might be required.

The leading counsel for the prosecution having risen to state the case, began by remarking on the painful nature of the jury's duty that day, and the distinctions which this case presented from the generality of murders tried in courts of justice. Mr. Crimson then went on to say—

"The evidence which it will be my duty to lay before you, in support of this accusation, will be chiefly of that description which is termed circumstantial. By some, very serious, and I admit very well-grounded objections are made against this species of testimony, as apt to mislead; while, on the other hand, there are authorities who have sanctioned it as the best guide to truth, because it presents facts—uninterested—incontrovertible—which can be framed neither one way nor the other, but which leave the truth to become self-apparent. You will judge, when you hear those facts proved, whether they can leave any reasonable doubt on your mind as to the guilt of the prisoner. If they can, and do, it is his undeniable right to claim the benefit of that doubt in an acquittal. But if, as I fear they cannot, then, however painful to yourselves, your oath leaves you no alternative but to pronounce him guilty. The witnesses I shall call before you, are in a position of life which is the best warrantry of their intelligence, while their relation to, and connection with, the prisoner, as well as the deceased, ensure us from the danger of their testimony being coloured by their affections. For friends so placed, individually, we must all feel the deepest sympathy and compassion. even while it is a source of pride and joy to live in a society where even these sources are rendered subservient to the truth, by the admirable working of the law, and relations are found sufficiently virtuous and honourable to comply with a law so trying. The facts these witnesses will prove, are as nearly as possible these." The learned counsel then narrated the circumstances of the murder, as they have been already detailed in the early chapters of this work; and having concluded his address by directing the attention of the jury to an "admission" by the prisoner, with a few general remarks, proceeded to call his witnesses.

Since the period of which we write, numerous important alterations have taken place in the criminal law of England, and one more immediately in our own day, which has very greatly changed the mode of conducting the trials for the crown. We allude, of course, to the recent prisoners' counsel bill, by which the counsel of those who are to defend themselves from the charge of crime, are enabled to address the jury for the defence, as well as the counsel for the prosecution. Before this act of tardy justice passed, the prisoner, it is true, might

employ counsel to cross-examine the witnesses produced against him, and to watch any error in the indictments, and the correctness of the proceedings generally. But the least word of argument or reasoning on the facts elicited by such examination, was denied—the least dissection or examination of any doubtful point shut out. This unjust and cruel state of jurisprudence had led to a practice assumed by the bar, and tolerated by the bench, of putting argumentative and reasoning questions on the cross-examination, so that the jury might be able to follow the intention with which they were asked. This was, of course, very inconvenient on the part of the defence; while, on that of the prosecution, there was a feeling of generosity which restrained the counsel within the barest possible limit against one who had no reply. But happily, for the true interests of justice and humanity, advancing civilization has swept away these remnants of that legal tyranny, of which Macheath so tenderly, and with so much truth, complains.

"I'm sorry to see, Doubtful," whispered Botherem, "that the jury have chosen a d—— convicting-looking dog for a foreman."

"Do you think so?" replied Dick.

"Yes, I do," returned the other; but before he could say more, Thomas Corkindale, the first witness, was called, and having been duly sworn, he was examined in chief, and deposed to being butler to Sir Job Periwinkle; that he remembered the morning of Christmas-day perfectly, and was at his master's house, Berrylea Grange, in that county; that having heard some noises during the night, he arose at daybreak, and looking out of window, saw some footmarks and traces of blood, leading down the avenue from the hall-door, where also was a large splash, as if bloody water had been thrown out; that he immediately went down to examine these appearances more minutely, and traced these same marks up the stairs to the prisoner's bedroom; that he found the door of the last *closed,* and opening it as softly as he could, crept in, and saw the prisoner lying in bed, with his face downwards—his bed, his clothes, his room, and self, covered with blood; that owing to the late arrival of a guest, the prisoner's cousin, Mr. John Periwinkle, had shared the prisoner's bed; but that he was not there when Corkindale went in, nor had he ever seen him alive since; that several times of late high words had been heard to pass between the two, in which the name of a young lady, cousin to both, had been mentioned.

The leading counsel for the defence now rose to cross-examine him—

"What kind of a temper, Corkindale, was your young master, Paul, the prisoner at the bar?"

"Excellent temper, sir—nothing could be better."

"How long have you known him?"

"Ever since he was a child, sir."

"Did you ever observe anything quarrelsome about him?"

"Never, sir."

"What kind of character does he bear for disposition?"

"The mildest, quietest gentleman that can be, sir. 'Tis utterly impossible, sir, that any character or disposition can be better."

"You said something of high words between the prisoner and the supposed deceased—did you ever hear them joking one another about this lady?"

"Yes, sir; over and over again."

"Then, Corkindale, can you take upon yourself to *swear* that these high words might not have been intended by them for a joke or jest?"

"No, sir, I *cannot* undertake to swear that."

"What were the general terms on which these two lived?"

"The best of terms, sir—nothing could be more so."

"Were you in the room when it was proposed that one should share the other's bed that night to accommodate a guest?"

"I was."

"Who first proposed it?"

"Mr. John, sir."

"When Mr. John was at sea, did Mr. Paul seem as anxious for his safety as the rest of his family?"

"Quite, sir."

"How long had day broken when you first saw the snow-marks in the avenue?"

"It hadn't *quite* broken."

"And yet, could you see that the marks were the *colour* of blood?"

"Well, perhaps, sir, I couldn't quite see the colour; but I saw they were drops of something dark, and thought they must be blood."

"Well, now, as you've made a slight mistake in one point, perhaps you have also in another. Can you swear, Corkindale, that the door was not *on the hasp*, as it is termed, instead of *shut*, when you went to the prisoner's bedroom?"

"Well, I can't exactly say I'd wish to swear to that exactly. It might have been just the least thing upon the jar, as it were, though I thought it was shut."

"Did you see any footmarks traversing up the avenue, as well as going down?"

"None."

"Did you observe any footmarks entering the house at any of the lower windows, or at the back entrance?"

"I saw none at the windows, and when I unlocked the back door, the snow was undisturbed."

"What kind of noises were those you heard?"

"As if somebody were about in the house."

"Why then, did you not go down to see?"

"Because they ceased almost as soon as I'd just heard them."

"Then there was no noise of any one fighting?"

"No."

"Nor any one struggling?"

"No."

"Nor any screams?"

"No."

"But simply some one moving in the house?"

"That was all, sir."

"Now, how many were sleeping in the house that night?"

"Servants and all?"

"Yes."

"Between twenty and thirty."

After a slight pause, the leading counsel resumed his seat. He had risen a doubt on every point that made against his client; he wished not to try for more; while at every answer that was made, his eye almost supplied the place of speech to the jury, and said, as plainly as the tongue could have done—"Just attend to that."

No question was asked of Corkindale either by the other side in re-examination or by the judge, and the butler having got down from the box, Sir Job Periwinkle was sworn.

Nothing could exceed the interest manifested in court, on hearing the name of the unhappy father called as a witness against his son. Many of the spectators rose in a body, as if anxious to catch the first glance of him; while the better part of the audience, though they did not move, had their sight intently fixed on the box in which he was to appear. Both the haste and the anxiety were unnecessary. Soon the commanding figure of Sir Job appeared, towering above that of all others—in the words of Curran, "a mighty monument on a conspicuous pedestal." On beholding his son, whom he had not seen since the fatal morning, all the assumed coolness of his manner, and the colour from his cheek, fled; he staggered towards the support beside him, and averting his eyes, held out a trembling hand for those revered gospels on which he was to depose to facts, that might give the child of his love to the gallows! As soon as he was sworn, the judge, observing his condition, ordered him a chair, and the first preliminary questions being put relative to time and place, he was several minutes before he could master his emotion sufficiently to give the required answers.

"With your lordship's permission," said Mr. Crimson, "I'll put in the admission made by Periwinkle when in prison. The magistrate who is to prove it, is sitting on the bench, and while he's being sworn and proving the admission, Sir Job will have had time to recover himself from a state of feelings, which, unfortunately, are only too natural."

The judge having signified his concurrence, this was done, and the admission so verified on oath, was as follows:—

"On the evening preceding Christmas-day last, some difference had arisen between myself and John Periwinkle, relative to the intimacy subsisting between him and his cousin Nora, in which she also took part against me. Having my suspicions aroused, I determined that night to lie awake and watch the conduct of John, who usually slept in an adjoin-

ing room, but was that night to share my bed. Having pretended to be asleep, John Periwinkle rose, as near as I can recollect, about two o'clock, and left the room, closing the door. I immediately rose after him, gently opened the door, and listened for his footsteps. They, contrary to my suspicions, I heard descending the stairs. I then left *my door ajar*, and returned to bed. I laid awake and watching for more than two hours; and at length, unable to resist the effects of fatigue, unconsciously fell asleep. I awoke in the morning, just before daylight; and remembering what had passed the night before, felt for and missed my cousin John. In an agony of self-reproach and jealousy, I arose again and listened; but could hear nothing except the baying of my cousin's dog under the window. In hopes to calm myself, I bathed my face and hands, and then threw the water from the window at the dog, to drive it away; and finally, unable to conquer the feelings that assailed me, and the thought that in my sleep all my previous watchfulness had been rendered futile, I gave myself up to that phrenzy of passion which prevented me from sleeping again, and left me in that state of agitation in which I was found by my father. Of the blood, however, discovered in my room, and all the other suspicious circumstances, I declare my solemn inability to offer the least explanation; and disclaim in the most sacred manner alike all knowledge of them, or participation in the death of my cousin: and finally, my only motive for hitherto withholding this statement, has been my unwillingness to say anything in my own defence which could either in the eyes of my own family or that of the world, militate against my relation, Nora, for whom I entertain the deepest affection and devotion; and who, I feel assured, has acted under the sanction of a marriage, however private and concealed it may have been; but the results of this last step having disclosed to the world her secret, I conceive it a duty I owe to my family and my own innocence to withhold this explanation no longer."

But though this was proved, ready for the use of the prosecution, whenever they should think fit to avail themselves of it, the above document was not then read to the jury, but reserved for another period, when it was conceived it would come in with more consecutive effect. By this time Sir Job had become sufficiently collected to proceed with his testimony; and on being asked to do so, began to tell his own story of the wretched morning in question; which, omitting the few interruptions necessary to confine him within the strict laws of evidence, was nearly as follows.

"In consequence of something told me, I got up earlier than my usual hour on Christmas day, and ascended to the bed-room of my son, the prisoner, which was on the floor above my own."

Here Sir Job corroborated Corkindale's account of the appearance presented by the room and stairs, and the fact of John Periwinkle having agreed to share Paul's bed for the night.

"On seeing the condition of my son's room, his clothes, and person, I looked to see if he was asleep; but he appeared more like one

who was suffering under some severe agitation of mind. He was lying with his face downwards, hidden in his hands; and as well from the heaving of the body, and the quickness with which the breath was taken, as the low moans he uttered every few seconds, I judged that he was awake, though he took no notice of my presence, or the noise I made. I then made him turn round, and his face was wet with tears, —and—"

When Sir Job got thus far, he made a dead halt, and vibrating backwards and forwards, seemed unable to maintain his composure any longer.

"My lord, I have to beg your pardon," said he, appealing to the bench; "I thought I had strength to go through with this horrid tale once more, but I have deceived myself. What the learned counsel requires me to prove, I beg he will ask me."

"Oh, certainly, my lord," replied the judge. "I am sure the counsel for the prosecution will willingly spare you every unnecessary pain at so trying an hour."

"Your lordship does me but justice," said Crimson; "I only took the other course, thinking it might save Sir Job some trouble. But perhaps his suggestion will not take much more time after all. Calling your attention to a wash-hand basin, Sir Job, did you see anything in that room which particularly attracted your regard?"

"Yes—I observed in the basin some stained water, as if some person had been washing away some blood, and had not thrown all the water out. I then naturally looked to see where it had been emptied, and not detecting it in the room, I opened the window, and looking out, saw a large splash on the ground, which, from its colour, might well have been made by throwing out water such as I have described; at the same time, I observed down the house a long streak on the yellow paint, which appeared to me to have been similarly made, and at the same time."

"What did you next?"

"I went up to my son, and made him turn round his face, which bore all the marks of violent emotion and tears, and from which, as well as from his hands, marks of blood seemed to have been recently washed. I asked him what was the matter. He said, 'Nothing—only let me sleep,' or words to that effect. I then insisted on knowing what had happened, and what had become of his cousin, John."

"What reply did he make?"

"He seemed violently agitated at the mention of the name, and dashing his hands down on the clothes, exclaimed something like, 'I may never see his face again.'"

"Did any other conversation then pass?"

"Yes; I asked him the meaning of all the blood upon his clothes and room. On my mentioning the fact, he started up and appeared equally surprised with myself, and demanded who had made the room in that state. I then told him, before he feigned so much astonish-

ment respecting the room, to look at his hands and face, giving him a mirror at the same time, and saying that though some one might have disfigured his room without his knowledge, it was impossible that they could also have attempted to wash blood off his face and hands without his knowing it."

"Did he return any answer to this?"

"Yes; his astonishment seemed even greater than before, and he replied, that he knew no more of that than he did of the other suspicious circumstances around him."

"Did you say anything further to him then?"

"Yes; I asked him if he had washed his hands in that basin, and then thrown the water out of the window. At first, he replied that he had not; then seeming to recollect, he rose and looked, first at the basin, and then out of window, and seemed very much distressed, finally saying that he *did* remember using the basin, but that how it came to be tinged with blood he did not know. I then asked what inducement could have led him to throw water from a front window; his answer was, that he heard his cousin's dog howling below, and wished to get to sleep. I asked him if he generally rose in the night to wash his face and hands; he answered no, but that he was feverish and uneasy. He subsequently told me that he had had a quarrel with his cousin, John; but on my asking if it related to my niece, he declined answering the question, and gave utterance to wishes that he had never seen her. I then left his room with Corkindale, the last witness, to search for my nephew, John."

"Did you observe any marks in the avenue before your house, that morning?"

"Yes; I observed drops of blood and foot-prints from the prisoner's room down stairs, and thence through the front door into the avenue, where the snow was lying; and these continued down to the beach, where they turned on one side, towards a more secluded part. Here there seemed to have been a general scuffle, by the marks on the sand, which was so disturbed that we could make nothing out very distinctly."

"Did anything there attract your attention?"

"Yes; I observed something dark partially covered by the sand, and I asked my son, Charles, who had come down with me, to try and take it out. When he had done so, the object in question proved to be a jacket, which was wet, and soiled with the sea, and torn."

"Did you recognize that jacket, as ever having seen it before?"

"I did."

"Whose did you believe it to be?"

"My nephew, John's."

"Did it bear any marks in particular, by which you could swear to the identity of it?"

"Yes; the cuffs of my nephew's jacket, similar in make, in shape, had the evening before been torn off in a romp at blind-man's-buff, and replaced with pins; and there, when we dragged this jacket from

under the sand, were the pins, in exactly the same position as we had all observed them on my nephew's arm, the night before."

"Did you observe any other marks on the jacket?"

"Yes; the other sleeve was torn off, and two large stabs appeared to have been made in the right breast of it."

"Did you observe anything else in the same place with the jacket?"

"Yes; in lifting it up, a large clasp knife fell out."

"Had it any marks upon it?"

"Yes; it was bloody, as well as the sand and the jacket."

"Nothing else?"

"Yes; it bore a name."

"Whose?"

The old gentleman, at this question, seemed so wholly overcome as scarcely to know how to endure the agony of his feelings—he gasped for breath—the sobs that struggled with his words for utterance were plainly audible, and all his efforts to master or divert his emotion, by chafing his forehead with his hand, as he leaned forward in the witness-box, were in vain; while from the bench downwards, the general sympathy with his sorrows seemed to make all beholders parties to his grief. At last the glittering tears, that he had striven so hard to subdue, burst from between his fingers, and ran swiftly down upon the oaken ledge before him. Finding that his efforts to appear composed were vain, he leaned back, and pointing towards the prisoner's dock, replied in a voice of the greatest agony—

"My son—Paul Periwinkle's."

After a slight pause, the counsel resumed the examination.

"Did you observe anything farther that day?"

"On my way home we found a shoe belonging to the same owner."

"Did you ever afterwards see the missing sleeve of the jacket?"

"Yes; it was brought to the Grange, the name of my house, a few days afterwards; and inside it was a human arm, severed at the shoulder and the wrist, and much swollen with sea-water."

"Did you examine the arm?"

"Yes; I had the sleeve stripped off from it."

"Did you see any marks, by which you could know whose it was?"

"Yes; I saw the initials, 'J. P.', which answer for those of my nephew, and from the arm being of the same size as his, and marked in the same manner, which, I believe, is done with gunpowder—tatooing, as it is called—I had reason to believe it was my nephew's arm."

"Do you know if the jacket, and knife, and shoe, are here in court?"

"They are produced by a constable," said one from behind.

"Let the constable be sworn."

This having been duly done, the constable deposed to having received the articles in question from the family at the Grange, and Sir Job identified them.

"The arm, I believe, Sir Job, it was found requisite to inter?"

"It was."

Here the examination in chief having terminated, the cross-examination began.

The excitement, if possible, became now redoubled, and the utmost eagerness was exhibited, to know how the counsel would handle a witness at once so formidable, from his position, his near relationship, and the fatal importance of his testimony—how break down or even shake facts altogether so overwhelming?

"He'll bully the old man out of court, when once he begins," said some.

"No, no—he wont," returned others.

"He'll put one or two unimportant question," said others, "and let him go without further notice."

We shall see how far the conduct of the counsel justified this sagacious argument, on a matter of whose principles the arguers were so ignorant.

"May I ask my learned friend," commenced the attorney-general, "if he has any objection to have that admission, which was proved before Sir Job's examination put in now? I wish to ask the witness a question on it; and, of course, do not desire to make it my evidence."

"Oh, certainly, no objection," replied the other side, "we are anxious to throw no obstacles in the prisoner's way—certainly not."

The admission made in prison, relative to his conduct, by the prisoner, was here put in and read.

"Now, Sir Job Periwinkle," said the attorney-general, "you have heard that *admission* of your son, as my learned friend calls it, read. If I understood you rightly, the account first given by the prisoner to you in his bed-room corresponds exactly, as far as it went, with the more detailed explanation just read?"

"Yes; as far as it went, it certainly did."

"Did you observe his manner that morning? Did he give you his account without prevarication, and in his usual manner?"

"Yes—certainly."

"Did you hear Corkindale's evidence, as to your son's general character?"

"No; I did not."

"Then, perhaps, you will attend, while his lordship reads it from his notes; and tell us how far you can corroborate it?"

"I think, sir, I may save his lordship the trouble, by at once admitting that nothing can, or could, be more amiable, gentle, generous, or humane—no disposition ever could be less likely to lead to such a charge as the———."

"—Very well; we'll not trouble you with anything farther on that point. Did you find the window of your son's room open when you entered?"

"Yes; I think I did."

"Might not the draft easily have closed the door while he slept?"

"Certainly."

"Did you find any wet stockings in your son's room?"

"No; I did not."

"Did you find any wet shoes—shoes that might appear to have been used in walking through the snow?"

"No; I did not."

"Did you search for any?"

"No."

"How was that?"

"It never occurred to me till this moment," and a ray of joy—the only one that had come to cheer his misery for many a long day, shot over the father's face at the thought.

"Well, as a thought so natural never occurred to any of you, perhaps you overlooked another, equally important, on the other side of the question. Did you observe in the snow any footsteps, as of one returning *to* the house, as well as going *from* it?"

"I don't quite understand you, sir."

"Why, I mean that if your son carried any body down to the beach that morning, he must have come back also, or he would not have been found in his bed; for I don't suppose that he used wings among the other mysteries of the night. My question is therefore—did you observe any such retiring foot-marks?"

"Why, I can't exactly say; when we went down to the beach, the foot-prints got so blended."

"Now, attend to me, Sir Job; when you first went out, did you observe foot-prints returning to the house, as well as foot-prints going from it?"

"Well, I tell you I can't exactly speak to that point."

"Oh, yes, you can—either you observed them, or you did not. If you observed them, tell us—if not, say so."

"Then, *I* certainly saw none."

"Very good. Did you observe any foot prints going *up* the stairs, as well as coming down them?"

"No I did not."

"Did you observe, in the hall, any dirty shoes, or boots, or stockings, as if left there by the prisoner?"

"No."

"Were any ever so found in any part of your house?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"May I ask if your nephew had not been at sea?"

"Yes, he had."

"Was he not somewhat addicted, as young naval men often are, to playing off strong practical jokes?"

"He certainly was."

"Did he not once run away from a vessel of war in His Majesty's service?"

"Yes."

"Was he not sometimes in fear of being apprehended as a deserter?"

"He used sometimes to talk of it; but whether he really was in fear of it, I cannot say."

"When your nephew and your son were on good terms, was it any unusual thing for one to lend the other his clothes, or any other similar little matter?"

"No; they were both somewhat of a size, and I believe often wore one another's shooting-jackets, or anything of that sort."

"Is it not, then, very possible, that your son, Paul, may have lent his cousin, John, the knife you found on the beach?"

"Certainly it is possible. It may even be probable, for anything I can say to the contrary."

"Is it not, also, still more probable, that your nephew may, in the darkness of the bedroom, have put on one of his cousin's shoes, and so worn it down to the beech?"

"Certainly it is."

"Were you present when the sleeve was ripped off this mangled arm?"

"Yes."

"Was the arm not very much swollen by the water?"

"It was."

"Did it not appear to have been beat about a good deal by the rocks?"

"Yes; a good deal."

"Did not the skin peel off, in several places, and adhere to the coat as you ripped it off?"

"Yes."

"Is it not possible, now, that a portion of the letters you have described, might have so peeled off with the skin? For instance, suppose the initials to have originally been J B, or J R, is it not quite possible that the lower part of the B or the R may have been peeled off, and so have left the semblance of J P?"

"Perhaps it is."

"Nay, more; might there not have even been another letter—a third initial—as J P T, or J P P, and the last initial so peeled, or rubbed, or beat off altogether?"

"It is certainly possible."

"Did you look at the wristband of the shirt-sleeve, to see if it corresponded with those of your nephew?"

"I could not; there was no sleeve on the arm."

"No shirt-sleeve on the arm at all?"

"None whatever—nothing but the blue cloth of the jacket, and the lining."

"Is that jacket at all uncommon among sea-faring people?"

"Not at all."

"Is it not also a common custom among seamen to tattoo the royal crown on their limbs, with their initials under?"

"I believe very much so."

"Did you observe if the wrist and shoulder were much battered from being in the sea?"

"Yes, a good deal so."

"You have said, that when you first asked your son what had become of his cousin, John, that he uttered something to the effect that he might never see him again?"

"Yes."

"Now, don't you think that if you had heard the whole speech correctly, it might, instead of that, have been, that 'he *hoped* he might never see him again?'"

"Yes; that's very likely."

"Was the blind down in your son's room when you first entered?"

"Yes."

"Then, as it was barely daybreak in the midst of winter, the room must have been rather dark?"

"It was so."

"Do you consider it improbable, that one lying in such a room, half asleep, should fail to distinguish the exact condition it was in?"

"Perhaps not."

"Were you bound over in any recognizances to appear here today and give your evidence?"

"Yes; my son Charles, and myself were bound over, in nearly five thousand pounds to appear."

The attorney-general having resumed his seat, the cross-examination closed. One or two questions, that left matters pretty much the same, were put in the re-examination by the counsel for the prosecution, and Sir Job was then left at liberty to depart. As he did so, he cast on his unhappy son a look, in which, for the first time, doubts of his guilt began to fight in aid of that strong affection which he had never ceased to feel, amid all the bitter ordeals to which it had of late been subjected.

Lieutenant Envee was then called. After stating that he commanded a small station in the neighbourhood for recruiting and pressing men into the king's navy, he went on to state, that in consequence of information he had received, he set his men to search the shore and sea of the bay opposite Berrylea Grange, for the remains of a human body; that after considerable difficulty, and having resource to trawling, they found a trunk, a skull, two arms wanting the hands, and two legs, which all appeared, in life, to have made part of one body, and to have been severed at the joints; that he immediately recognized the identity of the remains with the person of a friend, who had just become missing! and that person was John Periwinkle.

Mr. Doubtful then rose to cross-examine him.—

"How long have you been acquainted with the deceased?"

"Some weeks."

"Are you related to him?"

"Not at all."

"Was the body much swollen by the water?"

"Yes, considerably."

"How many of the features were perfect?"

"None."

"Could you tell from what remained of the wrist, whether the hand had belonged to a gentleman, or to one accustomed to work for his living?"

"No, I could not."

"How long was the hair of the head?"

"There was very little hair left on the head."

"How many teeth were missing?"

"I cannot tell; I never opened the mouth."

"What! do you mean to say you never examined the teeth at all?"

"No."

"What! cannot you tell whether the teeth had been paid much attention to during the life of the deceased?"

"No, I cannot."

"Was there enough of the eye left, to tell whether it was a blue or a hazel eye?"

"No, I could not undertake to say that."

"Could you tell the colour of the whiskers?"

"No, there was not enough left on the skin to discern that."

"And yet, do you mean to swear, that in this shapeless, featureless mass, you recognized the person of John Periwinkle? Now, don't hurry; it is a solemn question; time should be taken to consider it."

Witness, quickly—"Yes, I do."

"Did you ever see John Periwinkle undressed, bathing, or rowing, or anything of that sort?"

"No; I don't think I ever did."

"Do you know any marks which he had on his body?"

"No; I never heard of any."

"Can you tell me how many flannel waistcoats he used to wear?"

"No; I cannot.

"Can you tell me if he wore any?"

"No; I can't tell that either.

"Then what means have you of knowing what difference in bulk would have been made in Mr. Periwinkle's appearance, by his being dressed or not?"

"I think I have a very fair means, when all I can go by is my belief."

"That is no answer to my question, sir. Have you no other means of guiding your knowledge, than what you call this belief of yours?"

"No; I have not."

"I think you said the body was very much swollen by the water, did you not?

"Yes I did."

"Had the fish begun to attack it much?"

"Yes; in some places."

No questions having been put to this witness on re-examination, Colonel Barton was then called.—

"I am a Justice of the Peace.—It was by myself and another magistrate, the prisoner at the bar was originally committed.—A trunk of a human body was produced by Lieutenant Envee, as having been found in the sea.—I saw all the limbs, which were supposed to have belonged to that trunk, and though in a state of great disorganization, by exposure to the water, I have no doubt that they originally formed part of the same human being.—They, in figure, appeared of much the same height and make as Mr. John Periwinkle."

This witness, on his cross-examination, gave nearly the same testimony as the lieutenant who preceded him, with respect to the features and the more minute parts necessary to constitute the identification; when asked, however, if he would swear that the mangled remains were those of John Periwinkle, he replied—

"No; I should rather not make any such assertion."

The surgeon was then called, who gave very satisfactory evidence that the various limbs, trunk, &c. had originally formed part of one individual; but whether that individual was John Periwinkle, he did not know sufficient of the deceased to swear."

This ended the case for the prosecution. The judge, then turning to the prisoner, said—

"Would you like to address any remarks to the jury?"

Closely rivetted as Paul's attention had been to the evidence delivered before him, this remark from the bench produced a startling effect. For a few seconds he seemed unable to comprehend what was meant, and replied—

"My lord, my counsel will, I am sure, do me every justice."

"I should be very happy," said the counsel, rising, "but the law which arms the prosecutor to address a jury against you, gives your counsel neither leave nor opportunity to make any reply;"

"But," resumed the judge, "it leaves you at liberty to make any remarks you may please yourself."

"To what effect, my lord, could I address myself, unpractised and unskilled as I am to such a task;—I should only the more confuse my case, and do further injustice to myself by the attempt."

"Well, that is a matter for your own consideration; but still, if you think there are any points in the evidence which are favourable to yourself, you can avail yourself of your right."

"I thank your lordship; and as that is the case, perhaps the jury's kindness will be extended to me for a few minutes.—For gentlemen at this moment, which is to me the most serious in existence, if your opinions coincide with mine, your eyes need only turn towards this dock, to rest upon the most wretched, most miserable, and, I think I may add, without doing wrong to any one, the most

unfortunate of mankind! If you beheld any one stretched on a bed of sickness—racked with the keenest tortures—a prey to the most horrible suspense—his whole heart and wishes balancing between the warm affections of this life, and solemn preparation for the next—do I wrong your humanity in picturing the rush you would make to assist—the generosity that would prompt you to console—and the selfless efforts you would make to rescue him from all ills?

"Gentlemen! contrast that situation with mine!—Sorrow and suffering might be there; but shame would not be at hand to render them perpetual! Death might indeed disturb the mind of the dying, but it would be the death we must all eudure, and though passed early, is nevertheless passed for ever. But can my pangs be limited to this extent? my trials circumscribed by so ordinary a forfeiture? Placed on a pinnacle, from which my ceaseless degradation is evident to all the world—accused of the most frightful of crimes, against one of my nearest relatives—suspected by all in whose confidence alone I can have any happiness—the nearest and dearest relations of my life—placed by the law in fearful array against me—at this awful moment, on whom may I rely but you, Gentlemen? What is left to me of the numerous blessings of life I so lately possessed, except the justice, the good sense, the integrity of twelve gentlemen whom I never beheld till this solemn morning? And can you feel less for my position than you would for one infinitely less dangerous—less deplorable? I am sure you cannot! To the call which I make upon the kindest efforts your oaths allow, I am sure you will respond. Were I equal to the task imposed upon *me*, I should have no fear. Had previous practice, a course of studies, or any of the usual qualifications, enabled me to dissect the evidence you have this day heard, as it might be dissected, I should have little apprehension. But taken from the unnerving solitude of a gaol, clouded and confused by the sense of impending danger, the greatest, the most horrible with which a human being can be threatened, all that remains for me is to point out to your kind attention those discrepancies in the evidence which most strike myself, and leave it to your greater calmness, your more experienced sagacity, to sift the rest—hoping that for my omissions you will make that ample allowance which my situation justifies, and where a reasonable doubt remains upon your mind, give it, as you are entitled to do, in favour of one whom all are ready to accuse, and none to defend.

"Gentlemen, I should be the last man in the world to throw out a single insinuation against the most full freedom of the press; I am too well versed in the history of my country, not to know that it is the surest safeguard of our liberties which advancing civilization has been able to discover. But I do think it possible that the most perfect institution may have its faults, and the more powerful the engine to foster happiness, the more irresistable is it when misdirected to work oppression. From the moment that this unhappy mystery was propounded to the world, every newspaper and periodical throughout the

kingdom, has daily teemed with allusions, and anecdotes, and declarations connected with it. Not a doubt has been allowed in favour of a man who has never had the benefit of a trial; and in the same breath I have been found guilty of murder, without the investigation of a jury, and sentence has been ferociously carried into execution, without the decision of a judge. I have first been condemned thus unheard for murdering my cousin, and then been pointed out to public execration, for the cold brutality of having mangled his remains, and that, too, in a way unheard of until now. If one particle of this atrocious guilt could be laid at my door, I should indeed be worthy of all the detestation that has been cultivated against me. But what excuse can these gentlemen of the press make to themselves, for allowing the excess of a mistaken humanity to mislead them into an injustice against one who is wholly innocent?

"Gentlemen, it is by the facts which have been this day brought forward, that I can alone be judged, tried, or suspected; and strong and inexplicable as I grant they are, I shall first show their self-evident inconsistency, and then put it to you whether you can declare, upon your oaths, you have no reasonable doubt as to their proving my guilt.

"The learned counsel for the prosecution laid great stress on an explanation which I made when in prison, out of respect to the feelings of my family: this explanation he termed an 'admission;'—be it so, let him have all the advantages of his strained description. What does it admit?—that my cousin, John Periwinkle, and myself, had a slight difference relative to a lady also connected with us, and that I, in the night time, left the door of my bedroom open. From these facts, so simple, what inference was sought to be distorted? First, some evidence of a disposition on my part to work my cousin ill; next, the telling of a story in defence, with which co-existant facts did not agree. You, gentlemen, have seen how utterly both these deductions have fallen to the ground. You will remember, from the cross-examination of my father, that my account given to him at first, corresponds in every degree with the detail I subsequently rendered when in prison. And can the experience of everyday life be so twisted, that you should infer from any transient quarrel between your neighbours, the existence of an intention on one side savagely to sacrifice life on the other? You heard, also, from my father, that the window of my room was found raised, and that, though I might have left the door open on going to sleep, it might have been closed by the draught during my slumber.

"The facts of my room, my clothes, my face, and hands being stained with blood, are, I admit, terribly pregnant proofs against me; but as the circumstances which led to them occurred during my sleep, I will not mock you by attempting to explain a mystery for which I am wholly unable to account myself. Whether they are ever to be explained, or whether they are to sacrifice my life, I know not.—I leave it in the hands of that just God, who at this awful hour, thinks fit to withhold them from our scrutiny, and before whose foot-

stool I protest, by every thing most sacred in heaven and earth, that I am utterly innocent, and most entirely unconscious.

"Instead, therefore, of combating them with fanciful conjectures, I leave them to stand, in all their dread reality, against me, content, for my own safety, to oppose to them facts equally strong, equally undeniable, equally unaccountable. If there is any charge to be gathered against me from the marks of blood in my bedroom, down the stairs, through the snow, and on the beach—from the finding of my knife in my cousin's jacket—the discovery of the mangled and dissevered body, the identity of which has been attempted to be made out this day with the person of my missing cousin—it is this: that having had a quarrel with my relation, I first murdered or disabled him in my bedroom—then carried the body down to the beach—cut it limb from limb—buried part of these mangled remains among the rocks—and sunk the remainder so far out at sea, that they could only be recovered, after much pains, by trawling.

"To the truth of this story, mark how many circumstances are irreconcilably opposed. If I needed any proof of the hardship of my case, it is that I should be compelled to revert to any humble merit of my own. Gentlemen! you heard the character given of me by those witnesses who appeared for the prosecution, who have known me from my earliest infancy, and amid all the most intimate relations in life. They spoke of my disposition as it appeared—in no holiday guise, no show-day apparel—such as the ordinary acts and trials of life has disclosed it to them, and such as it would—it may fairly be supposed—influence me in all parts of my existence. Can you for an instant reconcile the inconsistency of so horrible a murder as the present, being perpetrated by a young man of so opposite a character?—upon one, too, so nearly related to him?—one who had never shown the least trace of violence or cruelty in his character? But supposing you overlook this first glaring improbability, how was I to have perpetrated this crime unheard, in the midst of a household consisting of nearly thirty people, one of whom was at the very time so watchful, as to have been aroused by the mere descending of some footsteps down the stairs? Gentlemen! my cousin was, in figure, of a far more athletic make and build than myself; if I had attacked him while awake, where were the cries of agony—the noise of a death-struggle—the desperate resistance of a young man in the prime of life, stronger and more powerful than his assailant? But suppose, that, in addition to all the other fiendish features of such a case, I had waited till my victim was locked in sleep, and then struck those two stabs which have been found on some mangled body produced in court, would there have been no groans—no stifled sounds of the parting agony of life? The history of past murders forbids us to think so; but granting he had expired without a single sigh, do you think it likely that the murderer, unstrung by such a dreadful act of iniquity, could have carried down the stairs a body heavier than his own, and that, too, in so noiseless a manner, that even to a watchful domestic, no tell-tale stumble—no heavy footstep slippery with blood, and tremulous from crime—should convey some par-

ticle of information? Can it be credited, that a person so laden, should be able to pass from the front door of a peaceable house, down a long avenue, where every thing would be conspicuous from the contrast with the snow—traverse a beach—cut up a body—hide one part of it—and sink the remainder out at sea—without a single individual of the neighbouring population detecting him in any one part of so extraordinary and hideous an undertaking?

But supposing, gentlemen, that your credulity were to pass over this. The bare time passed between the retiring of the family to rest, and the entrance of Sir Job Periwinkle into my room at daybreak, is not actually sufficient for the mere execution—much less the planning—of such a brutal and cold-blooded scheme! The family retired to rest at half-past one—an hour, at least, must be given before they could all be in slumber—this brings it to half-past two—day, at that time of the year, breaks about seven—and in the intervening four hours and a-half, is it physically possible for any man to commit such a murder—carry out the body—to dissect it limb from limb—to hide one part among the rocks—to take the remainder and sink it out at sea—and then to return quietly to bed once more? But supposing you are not staggered with even all these obstacles to belief, surely the most prejudiced believer in my guilt must give way and relent, on arriving at the fact elicited on the cross-examination, with regard to the footsteps! Where were the retiring foot-marks I must have made to regain my own room? Surely if I had been the murderer of my cousin, and had carried out his body, how could I by any possibility have regained the house without leaving some traces in that snow which had already been the tell-tale of my departure? Yet, gentlemen, no such traces are to be found; one solitary footprint has been tracked from my bedroom to the beach; not a mark was found on any part of that long road to indicate the return of him who went. This fact alone—this single, solitary, isolated fact—even if unsupported by any other, is sufficient to establish my innocence—and I entreat, I implore you to give to it all the consideration my friendless situation requires. You heard from the butler that the back gate was found bolted, and that neither there, nor at any window around the house, was there any mark of steps at all. Yet, gentlemen, I was found in bed, and if I had ever quitted that room, it is utterly impossible, without the aid of superhuman means, that I could have returned to it from the beach, without leaving some evidence by which I came back, nearly, if not quite as distinct, as that by which I went. Yet neither are there shoes, stockings, trowsers, nor any other article of dress, which could warrant the slightest suspicion of my having quitted the house that night. Neither can you suppose that these were concealed by any cunning on my part; for surely, if cunning had formed any part of my plan, it would have been exhibited in suppressing the more alarming evidences of guilt, and not have allowed these to have remained at large, while my care was engrossed by insignificant details.

"Gentlemen! this one point is clear—one person only can have left my bedroom that night; and as my cousin, John, is missing, it is

only fair to infer, that he was the person that quitted it; and that, if he came by his death, his murderers must be searched for, among those, who upon that night, were struggling upon the beach. The guilt cannot lie upon one who remained sleeping quietly in bed. The circumstance, of all others, that, in my own mind, most militates against myself, and for which I am most at a loss to account—I tell it boldly, and without the least attempt to deceive you—is the bloody water found in my wash-hand basin. This alone can be the solution—the same cause that sprinkled the blood on my clothes and throughout the room, must have shed it also upon my person; and I, ignorant of the whole, and in the dark, by a simple act, intending to refresh myself, must have left the traces of that blood in the water. This is clear, concealment could not have been my object, or why attempt to wash from my face and hands only, marks with which the whole room was stained. What the motives of my cousin can have been—whether he might have arisen in sleep, wounded himself, and left the house, and on the beach have met with some disastrous fate, heaven only knows! but from the facts I have pointed out to you, no one can, I think, believe that I either murdered him in the house, or conveyed his body beyond it. Had I been found without my father's premises, there might have been room for doubt; but how can suspicion be harboured against me of having left the house, when morning finds me within it, without a trace of my return, and that under such circumstances, that if any return had been made, no human ingenuity could have effaced the marks, or obliterated the proofs of it? We now come to the last point for your consideration. A body has been produced in court, and a being has been found hardy enough to swear that it is that of my cousin—acquainted with him but for a few weeks, and that in so slight a degree, as never to have seen him but in his ordinary apparel—ignorant of how much, or of how little, that apparel was composed—confessing that the body was considerably swollen by the action of the water—unable to disguise that not a single feature was left perfect on the skull—and so careless of ascertaining the truth, as never to have examined what slight details were left—this gentleman alone can swear to the identity of my cousin, and on an oath so founded, ask you to add the final link to such a chain of improbabilities, and with it to bind the neck of the victim to the head of the gallows! Can it for a moment be thought possible that you will be satisfied with such a degree of identity? Where is the evidence of my father, his uncle—my brother, his cousin—the butler, his old servant—all of them perfectly cognisant of his person—all of them accustomed to behold it at all hours, in every variety of dress, from the days of his childhood until now. All this evidence was available—all these witnesses were in attendance, yet not one of them has been able to declare his belief that the murdered body sworn to in court is the same with that of my missing cousin. Even their own witness, the surgeon, declined to assert it. What, then, gentlemen! can you, for evidence so complete, faultless, and satisfactory, accept instead the presuming assertions of a comparative stranger, and thus take from a fellow-creature

that life which is the gift of God?—No! gentlemen, I cannot believe, that however great the mistaken clamour of the public has been against me, you, who have the awful responsibility of this hour to support, and the sacred obligation of your oaths to sustain, can, upon evidence so uncertain, and so contradictory, run the risk of committing a still greater injustice than the supposed murder; or for a temporary oblation to popular excitement, forego an act of virtue, the remembrance of which will be dear to you through every moment of life, and prove the sweetest recollection that can cheer the pillow of a death-bed—that, namely, of having stepped between the mistaken zeal of a misdirected people, and the judicial murder of an innocent man."

The prisoner, who by this time seemed faint and exhausted by the efforts he had made, bowed to the jury as he terminated his address, and his lordship commenced the summing up.

"Gentlemen of the jury! the case has now arrived at that degree of maturity, which requires I should sum up to you the evidence you have heard. It would be idle to disguise from you, that you have a most painful and dangerous duty to perform; but could it even be more so than it is, there is one sure path by which you can discharge it honourably and well. It is this—to advance fearlessly and straight forward towards the truth, disregarding all prejudice, and unmindful where the sword of justice may fall, provided only that it is her arm that guides the weapon. If, in the investigation of the facts before you, any reasonable doubts should arise in your minds, it is a duty which I am sure you will cheerfully fulfill, to give the benefit of those doubts to the prisoner at the bar. The evidence by which you must arrive at your verdict, is of that description which the laws term circumstantial. Much has been said for, and more against it, but I think it my duty to tell you, that of all kinds of testimony, it exacts more attention from a jury than any other, at the same time that it bestows the greatest share of responsibility. You will now attend while I recapitulate the evidence."

The learned judge here commenced with the testimony of the first witness, and very carefully went over the whole of their examinations, commenting, as he did so, on the various degrees of probability, doubt, and belief to be attached to each. After this, he took the facts stated by the prisoner in his address, and finally concluded the summing up with these words—

"In all inquiries, gentlemen, where truth is the object of our search, it is of the greatest importance to reject all extraneous matter, and to concentrate our attention upon those points alone, which are of vital importance.

"Judging from the testimony which I have summed up to you, your verdict, it appears to me, rests upon the degree of belief you entertain on these three points. First, do you believe that the remains found on the beach are the remains of John Periwinkle? If, from the state of decomposition, and the want of those minute marks which are generally necessary to guide us in our identity of one another, you are of opinion that sufficient evidence has not been produced of its being the person of whose murder the prisoner stands charged, you

must give him the benefit of that doubt, and acquit him; for the law, at this period, is too enlightened to judge any person guilty of murdering one, whose body has not been discovered, lest, at some future period, the real individual missing should appear alive, of which case, there is more than one instance recorded. If, however, you think these remains are sufficiently identified as the person of John Periwinkle, you must next determine whether the deceased came to his death by his cousin, the prisoner at the bar. If, taking all the circumstances into consideration, you deem this point also sufficiently proved, there only remains a third necessary to constitute your verdict. Whether, namely, the prisoner at the bar, in causing the death of his cousin, John Periwinkle, did so by accident, in self-defence—in the heat of sudden quarrel, or with pre-determined malice. If, from the evidence, you believe that the last motive actuated his conduct, then, however painful to your feelings, you have no alternative but to pronounce him guilty of murder. If you believe that some sudden quarrel led him to this deplorable act, then it will be competent to you to return a verdict of manslaughter. If, on the other hand, either of the two preceding impulses appear to you to have led to his death, it will then be in your power to acquit him. The character given of him, by witnesses whom you are bound to believe, is of the most amiable and exemplary description; and if a reasonable doubt, as I have before told you, presents itself from any part of your investigations, this weight of character should be an additional reason for determining the balance in his favour."

The judge having now concluded his remarks, the jury were ordered by the clerk of arraigns to consider their verdict, and rising, requested to retire, accordingly.

Every eye was fixed upon them as they left the court, and the prayers and wishes of many an anxious heart followed them into their chamber—there where the fates of life and death attended their footsteps, while the destiny of a fellow-creature tremblingly awaited their return.

One, two, three hours passed, and still they remaided absent. Lights had long been lit in the court—Dick Doubtful alone remained at the Bar table, nodding heavily every now and then, in spite of all his efforts, from the feverish want of sleep—the judge was absent from the bench, taking some refreshment after the heavy labours of the day—all the passages, galleries—every spot available to the public, were densely thronged with those whom the interest of the trial had detained there since the morning.

Sir Job, and all the male part of his family, remained in an adjacent room, strung to the last pitch of fearful excitement; while at the bar, pale, faint, and utterly exhausted, sat our unhappy hero. What pen shall penetrate the mysterious chambers of the heart, or attempt to portray his feelings at this hour? Which might then preponderate—the vainly subdued eagerness of hope—the chilled, yet confiding consciousness of innocence—the skilful yet despairing energy of guilt—physical lowness, and suffering of imprisonment—maddening

recollections of an ill-fated love—the subdued, yet undying attachment to life, from which youth cannot disentangle itself—the irritating pride of wrongly accused integrity—the chastened reliance of a noble soul upon the God of truth—which might then prevail?—or who shall attempt to analyze and separate these impulses, thoughts, and feelings—to assign to each its proper place, or define the force exerted by them? More difficult still, who shall attempt to give a just picture of that mind, agitated and occupied by each and all?

In various knots around the court might be heard parties discussing the evidence of the witnesses, the summing-up of the judge, the addresses of the counsel and prisoner, and more than all, the probability of the verdict which was to ensue.

Every minute that passed, our hero heard the prognostications of an acquittal grow more and more frequent, and more confidently expressed. Still he closed his ears against the flattering hope, that might so cruelly deceive him—still he heard the opinion gaining ground.

"Whenever a jury deliberates in this way," said Wrynecker, with an air of positive certainty, "they invariably find for the prisoner or defendant—always found it so—scarcely ever knew a case in which prosecutor or plaintiff got anything by these long verdicts, save it was costs out of pocket for their pains."

The Judge had returned into court about ten minutes, scarcely had Wrynecker ceased speaking, when the door of the jury-box opened, and the jurymen once more appeared. In an instant every tongue was hushed—the faintest whisper might have been heard at the most distant part of the galleries.

The clerk of arraigns rose—

"Gentlemen of the jury, how say you—is Paul Periwinkle guilty or not guilty?"

The foreman of the jury leaned forward, and in a low voice, which nothing but the deep silence could have rendered audible, replied—

"Guilty!"

"You say," pursued the clerk, in the usual form, "that he is guilty; this is your verdict, and so you say all."

Scarcely could the finding of the jury have been understood at the other end of the court, than a sudden shout arose.

"Silence!" thundered the judge, rising from his seat on the bench, "the first person who offends in that way, stands committed."

Through the well-timed authority of the magistrate, this disgraceful exhibition in his presence was quelled. But the intelligence ran like fire upon a train that was to explode everything like sense and decency before it. The populace in the streets learned the verdict a few seconds after it was uttered—shout upon shout—cheer upon cheer rose offensively to that heaven which glories not in the death of a sinner, and where it may fairly be supposed this exultation over the condemned, is about the last proof that will be taken of the virtue of

the exulting, by that unerring judge "to whom all hearts are open, and from whom *no* secrets are hid."

When the tumult had somewhat subsided, the clerk of arraigns said to the prisoner—

"Paul Periwinkle, what say you why judgment should not be had upon you according to law?"

When the public gaze was directed towards the dock where the prisoner had lately stood, he was seen no longer. Exhausted by contending emotions, physical strength had given way to mental torture, and the turnkey was busily engaged in endeavouring to restore that animation which the verdict had suddenly banished. Some time passed, however, before this could be effected, and when, by the administration of wine and air, he was at length restored, the question was repeated.

"If," said the prisoner, wildly, "innocence is an insufficient shield in this world, I ask no other!"

The judge then commenced passing sentence, which was confined, as nearly as possible, to the shortest form, and all hope of mercy having been withdrawn, the prisoner was sentenced, as was not unusual at that period, to be hung on Hatherton Point, which commanded a view of the bay where the murder was supposed to have been committed.

Such was the scene passing in court. Without its sacred limits, how were reason and humanity debased! Beings who could scarcely point out one generous or humane action in their lives, now tossed their caps on high, and gave forth all their approbation of what they termed the justice of the sentence. Yet were there none to feel for the thrice-wretched prisoner?—was there no kindly allowing bosom which some hope of his innocence did not hallow?—some doubt of his guilt did not still linger to support? Was there no heart to beat in sympathy with one charged to a point of grief and madness that almost bade it beat no more? Who was to convey the dreadful intelligence to the father?—who was to lay the blood-stained robe of many colours at the feet of Jacob?—who was to tell the old man that his darling had become the lion's prey—far worse—the fruit of the gibbet—the victim of the law? On Wrynecker this heavy office had devolved. When first the verdict met his ear, surprise scarcely allowed him to comprehend it; but the sight of the black cap—the first awful words of the sentence—made him rush from the court; and with quivering lips, and the tears standing on the eyelids, he vainly endeavoured to arrange, in some gentle language, the bitter truth.

"I see!—I see it all!" said Sir Job, translating Wrynecker's appearance with no less truth than agony. "You needn't speak!—The worst has befallen us!—God's will be done! And now, since I am so soon to lose my boy, get me the only consolation my life is worth—that of softening what remains of his, by sharing his prison!"

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-NINTH.

### WHICH HAD BETTER BE READ TO BE UNDERSTOOD.

The hour that bereft our hero of the last hope of human happiness, restored to him, nevertheless, the only compensation for its loss which it was in the power of Heaven to bestow—the affection and tenderness of his family. Let not too frigid a morality blame them for its bestowal. True it was the laws of his country had pronounced him one of the greatest offenders their policy could know—true it was that their hearts revolted at the crime they had pronounced him to have committed. But here let us mark, in the broadest characters, the folly, the fatuity, the inconsistent criminality, of convicting prisoners upon doubtful or insufficient evidence. How idle, how mischievous—if it were not deplorable how ridiculous, would be "the sting of the law," when public sympathy does not go with it!—Not the idle cry of the senseless, prejudiced, misjudging rabble, but the sober and reasonable sympathy of the public, to dignify with the weight of retributive justice that which is otherwise the blind and bloody revenge of the most cowardly selfishness. The time which had elapsed before the facts which had come out at the trial, had given passion time to cool, and judgment matter to digest; and not even the conviction of their uselessness could stifle in the bosoms of Paul's family their doubts as to his guilt.

Perhaps also there arose some traces of remorse for the facility with which they had believed him guilty, and the sternness with which, under this impression, they had forborne to shelter him. Accustomed to sacrifice every personal good to the pursuance of the sternest principle, there now awoke in the mind of Sir Job occasional but most bitter misgivings, as to whether he had not fixed the murderous halter of the law upon the neck of an innocent man, and that man his own son.

As is always the case when misfortune presses most hardly upon us, there were not wanting many kind friends to urge home to the heart of the father, this most poisoned arrow. With that eager generosity which formed part of his character, he hesitated not at the inconsistency of hurrying to the Home Secretary, and urging with the full weight of his influence the misgivings which tormented him. Touched by his relationship, and admiring his straightforward conduct from the beginning of the accusation, the secretary lent his utmost power to gain at least such a respite as might permit further investigation. In this humane effort all his wishes were rendered futile by an opposition of the most fatal nature, and from the highest quarter. The King, who seemed to regard the gallows as the loftiest point of his prerogative, became alarmed, and refused to interfere.

The reasoning on which this refusal was supported, was to this effect:—that any proceedings in favour of Paul Periwinkle, would

form a just ground of complaint to the friends of all who might have been improperly hung on circumstantial evidence before.

As a last favour, however, and by way of qualifying this austere sentiment, His Majesty granted an interview to the unhappy father; but the monarch feeling conscientiously obliged to reiterate his Draconian views, Sir Job retired from the presence, not so greatly comforted as he ought to have been by the honour, and almost broken-hearted at that inevitable result which he had been mainly instrumental in accomplishing. All that now remained for him, therefore, was to hurry back to his child, and endeavour by redoubled tenderness to soothe his own wretchedness at his failure.

By a strange fatuity, not unexampled in the annals of mankind, the miserable parent was now placed in a position that rendered the guilt of his child his greatest comfort. "If my son is innocent," thought he, "I am among his chief murderers; it is only in his criminality that I have any excuse. Horrible resource!" Though too proud of heart to confess it to himself, he saw—he knew—he felt, that in this alone every hope of future happiness consisted.

Bitterly did he upbraid himself during the silent watches of the night, as these most agonising truths intruded; and after hours spent in torture, so exquisite that no effort could record, no inquisition could inflict it, he would hurry, unrested and unhappy, by break of day to the prison where his son lay confined. There, on his knees beside Paul, tears trickling over the furrows of his cheeks, he would implore our hero, by every adjuration that could most affect a child, to reveal to him the truth, and to confess how far and in what degree he was implicated in the crime laid to his charge.

"My dear father," was the reply made, "no one can feel for your sufferings more acutely than I do; I am but too well aware that they surpass those which I endure. But not even to relieve you can I implicate myself in the guilt of destroying a cousin whom I loved, and whom I would have risked my own life to serve, heedless of any trivial quarrels which may have passed between us. Not in the most distant way am I at all cognizant of the circumstances that led to his death or disappearance. Any unprejudiced observer who heard my trial must, I am sure, have come to the same conclusion; but the real truth lies in this fact—the public mind has been so unjustly prejudiced by the remains of my cousin's body having been found mangled on the beach, that, impartial as an English jury generally may be found, they were unable in this instance to give to their prisoner or their own judgment anything like a fair trial. How else could they have come to the conclusion that the murder of my cousin was committed by myself, found, as I was, within your house, without a single foot-print in the snow to show how the murderer had regained such refuge. No; happen what will, you have this consolation at least left to you, under all the misfortunes of our family—that your son is perfectly innocent of the crime for which he is to die; and doubtless time, which has discovered so many delinquents, will restore to me that unspotted honour which it is now the sport of fortune to overcast. My last prayers to heaven will be, that your life

may be granted long enough to see the character of your son vindicated by the real discovery of the truth; and if not, I look to the creed which you taught me in infancy, for that recompense in a future existence which some inscrutable design denies to us in this. If you have any feelings of compassion for my share in these sorrows, grant me this favour—send some one with the utmost haste to bring back Nora. The only hope, the only wish I have on earth is to see her once more before all is over. If you desire me to know the only portion of happiness that my unprosperous life has yet in store, grant me this favour. No words can express to you the deep and burning passion that attaches to every thought of her. My sole reverie is of her by day; my very dreams are sweetened by her image; and often when the jail is still at night, her sweet and exquisite voice calls out my name, and wakens me to hear the irons clanking on my feet, and to see the cold bright moon shining down into my dungeon. Oh, if you have any feeling for the calumniated innocence of your son, do not, I implore you, stand between the only earthly happiness he asks or prays for! If I might only see her again—if I might only press her cool fingers to my burning lips, I could forget the brutal shoutings of the mob—my misjudged innocence—the ruin of my family—even the gallows itself, and the wretch who is to drag me out of life clinging horribly at my feet—I could smile at the conspiracy of fortune, treat it as a hideous phantasm of the night, and die happy!"

To adjurations such as these, intended to console and support him, how could the wretched father reply? Not by words—he did not attempt it; the agonised groans that burst from his heart—the perspiration that started on his brow—the shudder that crept over his limbs, and the dampness that suffused his skin, making even the cold of the condemned cell a comparative warmth and luxury; these proclaimed too truly, that his sufferings were augmented, not diminished, by a statement which his son had intended solely for his consolation.

The trials of this world it would indeed be difficult to enumerate; but with thy pure shield, sweet innocence! who need envy the panoply of undetected guilt? However bitter to endure the fight!—To continue the fainting struggle—this will at last bring its possessor triumphant through the severest sorrow; and is, in truth, all that makes the vast and essential difference between the enduring enthusiasm of the martyr and the crushing remorse of the criminal.

Promising most firmly that the last request of his son with respect to Nora Creina should be complied with, if possible, the wretched Sir Job slowly retraced his way from the prison, to despatch a trusty messenger to Ireland, with anguish tenfold deeper than that which weighed him down on entering it. Indeed how could it be otherwise? What unprejudiced eye could behold the open and ingenuous countenance that formed the manly beauty of our hero—what ear could listen to his straightforward and unevasive tale, the simple eloquence of the mind, not only unstained by guilt, but utterly abhorrent of it—who could be subjected to the natural and legitimate impulses of these, and not feel

deeply staggered with doubts of his guilt? On more than Sir Job was this influence strongly exerted, and on none more powerfully than his humble but sorrowing friend Jonathan Kickup. His brother Charles, no mean judge of the niceties of evidence, scouted with the utmost contempt and indignation every idea of his guilt. In the breast of Wrynecker these doubts were fanned into active life by the long esteem he had borne the family, and the personal prejudice which he entertained in favour of Paul in particular. With one resolve, therefore, a determination to rescue him from his impending fate was resolutely formed, and no step neglected that could ensure its success. In a matter, however, so perilous, the principal parties, and those who had most to lose, were cautious to put forward subordinates with whom these considerations were of less import. To Jonathan Kickup, as one whose skill was not easily to be surpassed, the principal arrangement of this matter was confided. That the trust was well reposed will at once be admitted, when we mention the fact that Jonathan was the first person—when the trial had gone against Paul, and even the appeal to the mercy of the Crown had failed—the daring Jonathan was the first person who boldly asserted that the game was not yet lost.

If the fact must be confessed, Jonathan had long previously cogitated in his subtle brain what steps would be necessary, should such an unfortunate event arise. His plan, therefore, was all prepared: it required but the slightest movement to set it in motion.

But even Jonathan was too cautious to be himself the principal mover; he, too, had his lieutenants, and most expert they were. Not that he would not have come forward himself, but that he had the sagacity to perceive he could more safely act through the mediation of third parties. The reason was this—the man on whom he had fixed, as the most fit and proper person for his necessities, was but very slightly known to him, and for the fidelity of this all-important personage, it was necessary to rely upon a go-between; and here was the only ricketty part of his structure. Here, if at all, fate destined that his scheme should be broken down. Whether he was to yield to fortune, or fortune to yield to him, the sequel will inform us. The party so material to his purpose, and on whose fidelity and discretion every thing was to depend—the faulty link in his chain—was the firm of Costs. "For a piece of necessary roguery," quoth Jonathan to himself, "I know not any man who comes up to '*Costs-in-the-Cause*,' and where '*Costs-in-the-Cause*' isn't quite up to the dodge, '*Taxed-Costs*' is sure to supply the deficiency."

This reasoning was very well on the part of our friend Jonathan, but we shall see how it fell out in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER THE THIRTIETH

### HOW COSTS-IN-THE-CAUSE WENT TO THE FOUNTAIN-HEAD.

The great difficulty which was felt by the allied parties in obtaining their object, the rescue of our hero from the gibbet, lay in this, to hold themselves guiltless of any conspiracy to defeat the ends of justice.

In order to render themselves as secure as possible, we have seen that each party tried to force off the responsibility upon the shoulders of a third. This could not go on for ever, and "*Costs-in-the-cause*" soon discovered that his claws were destined to pick the chesnut from the fire the moment any row commenced. Not that we would insinuate Costs had the slightest objection to the employment, only he liked to be well paid for it, and was so honest a man himself, that he did not take offence so much at the occupation, as at any doubt that might hang over the remuneration.

Now, Jonathan, who was almost as honest as Costs, did not object to pay for any piece of devious workmanship, only he wished to see the workmanship well done, before he paid the price of it. Between, therefore, the mutual confidence of these two, there was some slight danger of this honourable enterprise breaking down. Jonathan went to Wrynecker, Wrynecker went to his principal; but, unfortunately, Costs-in-the-cause was a man of so much honour, that none of them could find it in their hearts to oppress him with the price of his labours until his work was finished. The first instalment, however, Jonathan did give him, and the rest was faithfully promised the moment that our hero was safe from all the dangers of the law. With this Costs professed to be contented, and forthwith set to work.

It was a pity that so upright a gentleman should be partial to the hardware line: but Costs was a man whose loyalty went to the very bottom of his soul; and to see the image of King George upon a solid golden circle, was a delight for which he would forfeit all others. Before he proceeded far, therefore, in the efforts to which he was pledged, he either felt or feigned the necessity of further subsidising his minions. To Jonathan he knew it was useless to apply, and though he shrewdly suspected who were the intermediate parties, he held a consultation with his worthy brother, "*Taxed-costs*," as to whether he should not apply to the fountain-head. Taxed-costs agreed with the necessity, and said, as well he might, that there was nothing like it. Now both were agreed upon this point—that the fountain-head could be no other than Sir Job Periwinkle.

On the evening after the one, therefore, on which we left Sir Job returning from his son's prison, touched to the heart with that resignation which could soothe the horrors of the condemned cell—full of suspicions as to the justice which had placed its present tenant there, and pledged to yield him the only comfort he seemed capable of knowing, in recalling Nora Creina, for whom he had already sent, as well

as perfectly miserable at the part he had himself taken, the old gentleman was sitting, half maddened with his griefs, over his solitary and desolate hearth, when Costs was announced. With that want of delicacy which characterises so many of inferior education, the attorney had followed the servant to his master's door, and, while Sir Job was repeating the name to himself, as if uncertain whether he had not before heard it, and still more dubious how far he was acquainted with it, Costs himself entered, with a low bow.

Sir Job looked up with the stupified abstraction of one lost in his own sorrows, and, with the habitual politeness of the generous hearted citizen, motioned him to a seat.

"I believe, Sir Job," said Costs, taking a chair and putting his feet on the fender, "you are partly aware of the cause of my calling upon you?"

"I am not aware, sir," groaned Sir Job, trying to collect his thoughts.

"Why, Sir Job, you—you—you know your son, sir; I believe you are very much attached to your son, sir?"

"A child, sir," replied Sir Job, "I have been wrapped up in all my life;" then, as if muttering to himself, and leaning back his head, "it seems as if it was but yesterday that I first took him on my knee, and now—" was it a sob which checked the further utterance of the mayor? or did the fire-light sparkle falsely on some bright object coursing down his cheek? Sir Job drew his handkerchief swiftly across his face, and plunged the poker into the glowing coals before him.

"'Tis a sad business, sir," said Costs-in-the-cause, pulling out a monstrous dirty pocket handkerchief—for he had heard how strong the chain that sympathy can weave—"'tis a sad business, sir," repeated Costs, forcing the soiled silk into the corner of his eye, in hopes of forcing out a drop or two; "but I think, my lord, that our plan will set us all right at last—it goes on bravely, Sir Job, I assure you, too!"

"Plan!" repeated the mayor, looking at the other in perfect amazement.

"Yes, my lord, our plan. You know the—the—the—you know what I mean, my lord."

"I wish I did," groaned Sir Job, with a sudden burst of impatience.

"Why, my lord, you know what I allude to—the rescue that has been planned, and by which we hope to carry off young Master Paul safe and sound from the place of execution, and get him conveyed securely out to sea. I have come to tell you, sir, that it's going on as well as we could expect, and there is no sort of doubt but what we shall succeed—only, Sir Job, you must be a little more liberal, Sir Job, you know—upon my word you must—a little more confiding—" and here Costs assumed what he intended to be an air of winning candour, but which was in reality to Sir Job one of the most disgusting familiarity; "you mustn't expect to have all the work done without coming down with some of the stumpy, while the thing's in progress: there's nothing like money, Sir Job, to make the wheels go smoothly—you may take my word for it, and I have been often in these kind of matters before to-day."

"What is it you mean, sir? what is it you dare to insinuate?" demanded the citizen, drawing back from him with the utmost indig-

nation. "I don't understand you, sir; I don't know you, sir; I don't know what you mean."

"Come, come, Sir Job," returned the other, whose audacity, now that he had broken the ice, seemed beyond all bounds, "I'm not going to say that all that isn't very well acted and put on, and all that sort o' thing; only you see I'm an old stager at this work, and you mustn't expect to deceive me so easily! Not that it isn't all right and proper to keep up this sort of thing to the British public, and talk about justice and law, and so on; only, if two gentlemen like you and me are to do a little bit of private business comfortably—"

"—Two gentlemen!—you and I!—private business!—comfortably! —why, sir, who are you? what are you? where do you come from? what do you mean? I know nothing of your plans, your projects, or your person; and, from your conversation and appearance, would as soon go in a cart to Tyburn with a pupil of Jonathan Wild's, as move a single step in any confederation with yourself."

"Ha! ha! ha! that's not so bad, Sir Job; I must say that's a very good simile, considering the business I have come upon—I must say, Sir Job, you seem well up to private theatricals! Now, to hear you talk, one would really think that you had no sort of hand in the matter."

"The matter, you villain! What are you talking of? what do you mean? I tell you I never saw you till this instant! I never heard of you till this instant! I know nothing about you on earth! How is it you dare to intrude here? Are you a man, or a devil, that you come to insult one who is pressed down with the bitterest misfortunes? Have you come to make a jest or a mockery of me? or are you—perhaps, perhaps—the man is mad, and escaped," and Sir Job stretched out his hand to the bell.

"Come, come, Sir Job," said Costs, getting alarmed, "you have carried on this here game long enough—I am confident you must be joking—I am sure you must know well enough who I am, and that I come to do you all the service in my power, and neither to mock nor insult you. I know it's all right enough—holding the station you do, and giving out the professions you make—that you should pretend not to recognise me, or know anything about the matter I have come to you upon; and if you choose to keep the game up, I have not the least objection; and, what's more, old gentleman, I must do you the justice to say, I never saw a finer piece of humbug in the whole course of my professional career. Ha! you may start, but I never did—either better conceived or more fully sustained. Lor! lor! only to think how well you do carry it on! Ay! ay! I see! I twig! I take what you're up to—talk of a lord mayor! Why it would take in a judge himself. —But the long and the short of it is this:—I came here to tell you—now—have done with your acting, my Lord Mayor, if you please, and just hear me to an end, for I tell you I see exactly what you mean—I say I came here to tell you that, though our hands are all very willing, yet that I really wish you would order your man Friday to come down with some more of the blunt. You know as well as I do that we have only had a fifth of it yet, and here, the day after to-morrow, comes off

the execootion—and how, in the name of fortune, can I persuade them that their rhino will be all paid when they have to carry your young hopeful off to sea, and a whole country on their backs! It isn't right, Sir Job—it isn't rational: you'd have thought it very hard, sir, when you was in business yourself, to be treated in that way—it shows a want of confidence, and that's of the first importance in matters like this. Now, sir, you needn't speak—you needn't commit yourself—I don't want you to make any answer at all; but I see how prudent you are in every particular, and I very much approve of it, only all that I ask you to do is, to give orders, as I said before, to pay another quarter of the sum to-day, and a third to-morrow, and then, sir, you see, they'll believe that the rest will be remitted to them. I'm sorry to have broken in upon you, but it's my rule always to come to the fountain-head, and I wish you to hear what the real state of the case is—'tis great satisfaction to do business with a gentleman of your capacity, for I never saw anybody act their part better—your humble servant, Sir Job," and, making a profound bow, Costs-in-the-cause took two steps towards the door.

"Stay!" cried Sir Job, springing upon him like an enraged tiger; and, seizing the truculent lawyer by the collar, the energetic force of the mayor caused him to spin round and round, and then fall upon his broader termination in a corner.

"I say! hollo! my Lord Mayor!" somewhat angrily cried Costs, rubbing the part affected, and scarcely able to speak from astonishment, "acting's acting; but if you come to overdo your parts in that manner, I must be paid extra for my cast in the piece, or we must be referring the matter to Justice Shallow."

"Lie still, sir, lie still; move not a step, if you value a single limb belonging to your carcase," cried Sir Job, shaking over Costs the poker, which, in his warmth, he had snatched from the grate. "I have borne with your roguery, or foolery, long enough; and now, if you attempt to rise from that corner till you have explained to me the whole of your conduct, I will break every bone in your body, cost what it will!"

"Why, Sir Job, do you mean to say you have not been guying me all along, here, this evening?"

"Guying you, you rascal! what's that? what's guying you?"

"Why, gumming me, to be sure; 'its all the same."

"Why, what do you mean, you scoundrel, by gumming you?"

"I tell you what, my Lord Mayor," said Costs, his choler rising more and more every moment, "for a young gentleman in your station, you ought to know the English language a little more than you do, and that's no mistake. Do you understand what's meant by humbugging?"

"What, then, do you dare to insinuate that, by my conduct this evening, I have been treating you *ironically?*"

"Why, as to that," replied Costs, with a low kind of humour which infested him, "if you havn't yet, I stand a pretty good chance of it, if you don't put down that poker, and behave more like a Christian."

"Don't cut your low jibes on me, you pettifogging, six-and-eight-

penny tapeworm," roared the patriarch, his temper getting beyond all control, and his weapon vibrating with a rage that shook his immense person; "tell me what you came here for? tell me what you mean by hinting at a plot for the rescue of my son, and thinking me so basely unworthy of the liberties of a British subject, as to take part in it against the laws by which they are upheld?"

"What I mean? why of course you know what I mean—You must know very well that you have sent a certain person to me to engage a certain other person to engage with certain friends of his, in creating a riot at the execution of your son, and carrying him off in the row, scot free, to sea; and when you know that I am going to do this for the trifle of a couple of thousand pounds—risking my character, and name, and station for the small part that will come to my share—I say that it's hardly fair for a gentleman of your known wealth and rank, to be so niggardly as to the exact time and proportions in which the money is to be paid."

For a few moments after hearing this explanation, Sir Job Periwinkle seemed rooted to the spot in the most utter bewilderment of surprise and rage. That he—the patriot—the Briton—the immovable—the uncorrupting, incorruptible Sir Job, should for a moment be deemed guilty of shutting his eyes to such a plot, much less of heading it, seemed, at the first glance, almost incredible; and that a man should be found bold enough and daring enough to utter to his face such a thing, he could not even yet take in: he seemed to think it was a dream—a phantasm—a disturbance of the night, produced by the recent agitation he had gone through—it never could be that the animal beneath his poker was Costs, a mere certificated attorney—it must be some devil of the night, some hobgoblin, some grinning incubus. Once or twice he seemed on the point of solving the problem on the creature's skull; and, like Othello, prompted to cry out, "If that thou be'est a devil, then I cannot kill thee;" but Costs, who was more a man of words than war, nervously touched the poker, and dispelled the reverie.

"If you wish to live another hour, tell me who has put this upon you?" cried Sir Job. "I never will abet a single step in such an infamous design: father as I am, and wrapped up in my children as I have ever been, I had rather give every one of them to the gallows and follow them myself, than be guilty of an act so disgraceful to a Briton; and to prove even to you, scoundrel that you are, that I am not *acting*, as you have termed it, I myself will be the first to give intelligence to the government of a conspiracy so un-English, and to give *you* up to its punishment, as the chief instrument in its commission. Tell me therefore, I say, who has made use of my name in this matter? tell me, I say, this instant, unless you wish me to spatter your brains against that wall."

"For God's sake, Sir Job, are you mad? Help! Ho there! Murder! murder there, I say! Does it run in the family, that you are going to assassinate me?" Before any reply could be made to this cutting retort, or, luckily, any mischief done, the noise of the disputants had reached to such a height, that a noise was heard on the stairs, and in rushed Charles and Doubtful.

## CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIRST.

### WHICH CONTAINS AN ARGUMENT OF THE PERSONAL KIND.

"HOLLOA—Sir Job!—Costs! Can this be possible? What *is* the matter, my dear father? What *has* happened?"

"This scoundrel!" cried Sir Job.

"This madman," interrupted Costs, in a manner equally vehement.

"I say again, this scoundrel!"—renewed Sir Job, giving the unhappy attorney another thrust against the wall.

"Who but a madman—" again interrupted the solicitor; and then, as he found the pressure from without growing unbearable, "Counsellor Charles! Mr. Doubtful! will you see me murdered before your eyes?"

"Come, Dick, for God's sake, terminate this scene!" said Charles, interposing; and with his friend's assistance the prey was rescued from the lion's grasp, and Costs desired to leave the room.

"The scoundrel! The rascal! The unmitigated villain!" still ejaculated Sir Job, pacing up and down the room; "to think that 'he' should have dared to propose such a thing to *me!* *I*, who have all my life been so wrapped up in British principles; principles the very reverse from such a course! But *I* will make the scoundrel smart for it. He shall be struck off the roll of English attornies. I'll expose the vile conspiracy, and teach him in future to make such overtures to one of the first of England's magistrates!"

"What has happened, Sir Job? What *is* the matter? What has Costs done?" interposed Charles, striving in vain to find out what had been the cause of all this disturbance.

"It was a base attempt to extort money," cried the other; "it must have been. It could have been nothing else; surely no one ever could league with such a rascal for such a purpose; and this was a mere pettifogger's attempt, to ascertain to what degree the agony of a father might be tampered with; but he shall smart for it. I'll act as vigilantly as if the plot had all the existence his assertions would give to it! By this very night's post, government shall be forewarned, and I, at any rate, will take care that a life dedicated through so many years to upright conduct is not sullied by any deviation of mine at its close. The scoundrel, to think that *I* would save a son by such vile means!"

During this monologue, Sir Job Periwinkle had continued to stamp up and down the room, giving way to every excess of the passion raised within him, and, seemingly heedless that Charles Periwinkle and his friend, Dick Doubtful, were attentive listeners, appeared rather to be addressing his remarks to some invisible phantom that wandered round the compass, than to any person present. His last two observations, however, seemed not only to strike Charles as very pertinent, but to possess an interest of a far more absorbent character.

"For God's sake, don't rave about the room any more, but tell us what is the matter? Has Costs been emulating the glories of Guy

Faux, and broaching a second edition of the gunpowder plot? or what is it?" said Charles, placing himself in the path of his father.

"The matter!" replied Sir Job, whose attention now for the first time seemed fairly awake to what was passing around him. "Are you not aware of what the scoundrel had the audacity to propose to me?"

"How, in the name of fortune, should we, when, ever since we rescued the man from your gripe, you have continued to rave up and down the room in a manner intelligible to none but yourself. What has Costs been about? what has he done? what has he said?"

"Said! The scoundrel *could* not have said worse; you'll scarcely credit me when I tell you. He absolutely came here with a proposition that I should join in a conspiracy to defeat the ends of justice, by forcibly rescuing my unhappy son from the hands of the law at the foot of the gallows!"

"Is that all?" said Charles.

"All, sir? what would you have more? what do you call it? Is it not one of the most atrocious conspiracies with which the ear of a Briton could possibly be contaminated? You are rich in epithets; you pride yourself on your eloquence; where can you find terms sufficiently strong to brand such an undertaking?"

"Why as to that, if any hope is to remain of saving his life, desperate as it is, this plan of the little attorney is the only one that can possibly be devised!"

"What!" cried Sir Job, starting back several paces from his son, as if the plague spot had suddenly made its appearance on his face, "can it be possible that the boy in whom I have been so wrapped up, should utter to my very face sentiments like these. I can scarcely believe that I hear them from a son of mine—"

"Come, come, my dear father, pray don't imitate any of Lady Macbeth's heroics, for if so, I don't pretend to any chance of coming up with you. If you're going to talk like sensible Sir Job Periwinkle, who was once a London apprentice, then a British iron-master, afterwards a city knight and alderman, and now a shrewd, clever old gentleman, filling the honourable post of lord mayor of London, I've no doubt I shall be able to reason with you." As Charles said this, he sat himself down in his father's easy chair, and putting his right foot on his left knee, grasped his ankle, and began smoothing the wrinkles of his silk stocking with a degree of coolness which formed the most admirable contrast to the over-boiling rage of the frowning patriot.

Whether this *nonchalance* was really felt, or whether it was assumed for the occasion, may be a matter of speculation; but Dick Doubtful, who, with all his learning, was perfectly a child of nature in the ways of the world, looked on with infinite amazement at the scene.

"As for your being wrapped up in me," resumed Charles, in the same playful, sarcastic style, "that may be a very fine thing to assert, Sir Job, as you're not upon your oath; but, considering that you might on an emergency be rolled out into half a dozen men of my size, the

assertion to me is rather suspicious. I repeat again, that, unless some good fortune occurs to Paul, of the description to which Costs has hinted, there seems to be no other chance of his escaping a violent and disgraceful death. I don't mean to say that rescuing a man from the gallows is a sort of amusement that I should recommend to gentlemen of your time of life; but unless you wish to see your son cut off by the hangman, what other hope is left for you? You have already urged every argument with the Secretary of State—you have thrown yourself at the feet of your sovereign, whom you so venerate, and all in vain; every legitimate effort has failed, and now, unless some interposition is made from a less agreeable quarter, your child must die by the hands of the executioner, and his death on the gallows leave an ineffaceable disgrace on every one that belongs to him—"

"And better far," interposed Sir Job, who had been burning to reply, "better far that it should be so, than that his surviving relatives should be cursed with a guilty knowledge that his escape was owing not to his innocence—not to his acquittal by a jury of his countrymen—but by the unlawful, the corrupt, the unpardonable breach of British principle, by friends who prostituted the gifts of fortune to the worst of means. One son?—Perish rather, I say, fifty sons, than save me one by the practice of such iniquity."

"That may be all very fine for you, Sir Job; but excuse me for telling you that your sons would prefer a father a little less virtuous. I ask you, on your honour, have you not, as well as myself, many misgivings as to my brother's innocence?"

"A British jury has pronounced him guilty."

"That's no answer to the question. Are you a puppet—are you a child—can you form no opinion of your own—are you so thoroughly British as to give up your own thoughts at every turn, and be led by the nose, by any prejudice, on every occasion? What are the jury to you—did you empannel them—did you empower them—had you even the power of addressing a single reason to them?—when, and in what way, did you ever lead them in the least degree to believe that you would be bound by their verdict? Suppose a jury were to bring in that the moon was made of green cheese, would you call for bread and ale to taste it? or grant that they find me guilty, Prometheus-like, of filching fire from heaven, would you be one sufficiently ignorant and foolhardy to chain me to the rock for the theft? Either let us act as men of reason, or as beasts without it. As men, a verdict is only to be respected, when the evidence by which it is attained can be respected also; if as beasts, then force must take the place of ratiocination, submission be the result of weakness, but escape the prerogative of strength. In either alternative, I say that the project of Costs is not so culpable as you seem to think. I am morally convinced that Paul never ought to have been convicted on the bare evidence produced; and the execution of that verdict I should feel myself justified in opposing by every means in my power; the lawful ones I prefer, of course, as the least dangerous, but when these fail, lawful and unlawful would be alike to me."

"So shall they never be to Job Periwinkle," replied the father. "I only blush that a son of mine should debase his talents to defend the project, which nothing but the low rascality of such a fellow as Costs could recommend. Who that has a spark of patriotism—who that for a moment thinks of his country, could endanger the liberties of his fellow subjects by opening a course of corruption and violence, the end of which no man can see? Who that has any particle of those principles of justice that should fill the breast of every Briton, could think of trampling on the constitution, to rescue a man who has already had the benefit of an English trial? nay, more, what member of an honourable family could plunge a whole house in the guilt of a conspiracy, from the false shame of screening a condemned relative from the impartial administration of the law? I say again, who but such as Costs could embark in such a proceeding, and what infatuation can lead one of your sense to palliate it?"

"Honour, justice, patriotism!" cried Charles, his assumed coolness forsaking him, as he started from his seat. "Talk not, I pray, of patriotism, until you understand the full sense and meaning of the word; neither pervert the name of honour, till you have practised it on a scale somewhat larger than the barter of a merchant's produce; nor attempt to elevate by the sacred term of justice a jargon incompatible with the merest elements of sense; above all, think not to gain the effect of argument by the mere exhibition of abuse, generated in your own narrow circle of the city. Do you think no one can form more enlarged views, than were once bounded by the gory and blackened heads, that successive tyrants and traitors, whom you worship under the name of kings, have alternately exhibited to their gaping slaves over the gateways of the Tower and Temple Bar. Others besides Costs may have had their share in contributing to the dangerous but sole remaining plan proposed to you. Had you been content with calling the man an avaricious knave, I might not have troubled myself to gainsay it. Nothing but the madness of cupidity could have led him to confide to the advocate of every prejudice, a plan only to be supported by men who dare to think for themselves. It could never be intended that a particle of the project should come to ears so ill-fitted to comprehend it as your own; for this, and this only, the fellow is to be blamed. Do not imagine that it originated or will end with him; far different men are doubtless pledged to its execution, and will risk everything for its achievement—men whose honour and capacity you may have admired and availed yourself of; the soundness of whose intellect, or the excellence of whose hearts, no man for an instant can gainsay; and for which, were your prejudices left passive, you yourself would be the first to vouch. For myself, if your eldest son is not amongst the number whom you term conspirators, it is from no want of approbation of the desperate remedy, no withholding of support from those who have originated it. Can there be any true patriotism in bringing on one's country the false condemnation of an innocent man, when a few years may discover that error, the stain of which ages cannot remove from her juris

prudence. What is it that you understand by justice, if it means not the rescuing at all hazards, the life of the innocent from the death of the guilty—how can we desecrate the name of honour by withholding its sanction from the devotion of ourselves for the cause of another whom we believe worthy of it—how much less ought that man to venture upon such a word, who gives his son to the fate of the gallows, from mere fear of effecting his rescue, or the penalty that might follow it."

"As to fear, sir," returned Sir Job, "I think my breast knows as little of that emotion as your own; but it becomes us to sacrifice our feelings to our principles; and the same duty which compelled the Roman to pronounce the doom of his son at the expense of his heart, forbids me to stand between his sentence and the gratification of my own; I therefore reiterate my determination to mark my non-participation in any such plot, by at once informing government of its existence."

"Surely you cannot—you dare not—be guilty of so deliberate a murder! How can you justify to yourself conduct so abhorrent by pretexts so flimsy and so cruel—will your reasons bear a moment's examination? Look at them for an instant. You have exhausted the language to dignify with the finest terms the conduct that deserves the reprobation of the strongest. Do not for an instant imagine that the outrageous act which you profess yourself ready to perpetrate, results from any of the fine feelings you have mentioned, or anything, indeed, but the grossest vanity. Well and truly have you named the Roman as the only authority on record—the type of a nation whose bloodthirsty cruelty is almost without a parallel in the bloodiest annals of mankind. What but the most egregious, the most besotted egotism—what but the most cruel and relentless selfishness, could have led the Brutus to sacrifice his son for that which was rather the excess of virtue than the beginning of crime? And you, too, if you dare further to consider your threat, will be little better than he. Don't suffer yourself to be led away by jingling names, or high-flown sentiment, but look into your own heart, and examine what are the real motives of your actions. Who will benefit by your son's death, save the mob, who get drink and plunder at the brutalising scene?—is there a solitary individual in the whole nation who will receive the benefit of a single iota, unless it be the hangman, who is to receive his clothes for clasping his dying, struggling limbs, and tearing his head from its socket. Save this execrable wretch, whom you can scarcely call human, or designate as a part of the community—whom, I ask you, in the name of heaven, is to profit by your son's death? Then whose benefit is it you seek? Talk not to me of the false cowardly cant of patriotism; there is not the shadow of that sacred spirit here. Call it blind and brutal vanity—call it besotted and bloodthirsty selfishness, which would gather the blasted laurels of stoicism on the ruins of your children's hopes, happiness, name and character, and then you designate truly the act and motive that is prompting to so merciless a course; but do not profane any one praiseworthy principle that ever yet was known upon earth

with the prostitution of such a hideous offspring;—nay, more, Sir Job, if you do not, here upon the instant, renounce the character of informer, and which a momentary insanity has led you to adopt, it will be well indeed if the gallows shall deprive you, not of one son but of both, for who can ever again recognise as a father the man who could be guilty of such a deed?"

"Renounce, sir!" said Sir Job, as the overloaded vein upon the brent and swollen brow seemed almost bursting with the rage that agitated him, while the pallid cheek and bloodless lips marked still more fearfully the course of passion; "and who are you that dare thus to call to task the being who begot you, the man whose care has reared you, the senior whose instruction and tenderness has given you all you possess, has made you all you are? Do you imagine for a moment that I'll bear this schooling from the lips of a boy, who but yesterday was prattling at my knee—do you imagine that a life spent in struggling with the world has left me with an intellect so weak as to be blinded by the flimsy sophistry of a beardless lawyer? The nonsense you have uttered might have become you well enough if invented for a fee that the last hopelessness of crime had tendered in the desperate effort of mitigating punishment; but it does not and it shall not mislead me. Ungrateful lad, for whose pertness I am indebted perhaps to my own over indulgence, have you the assurance to suppose that your heart overflows with more tenderness to your brother than my own? Or that your head is so clear as to correct the conduct of one grey with thought before you had even life, much less ability to reflect at all? Look at home before you dare to utter threats to your own father, and think yourself well off, if the being you term merciless, can find forgiveness enough in his heart hereafter, not to cut you off to that utter beggary which your rebellious conduct has deserved. I tell you my purpose is unchanged. Much as I love my son, and nearly as it will go to shorten my own life, I tell you this very night I myself will be the first to inform government of the conspiracy formed to violate the laws; and if it involves one whose profession it is, and whose pride it should be, to venerate them in all their branches, let him look to the consequences which his own presumption has brought upon him. Informer!—yes, this very night the information shall be given."

"And I tell you, neither on this night nor on any other shall you possess a particle of power to give any such sanguinary information as you propose. Know, for the first time, if you never could discover it before, that when I take up a project I perfect it, and that in defiance of all obstacles; and here, a prisoner in your own room, shall you remain, till the time named for my brother's execution shall have passed; then, if fate goes against us, I must bear my defeat as best I may; while, if I am successful, I can afford to smile at the infatuation of a parent, who, having failed in the judicial murder of one son, is still at liberty, as far as his little power goes, of contributing to the ruin of the other. As for your fortune, take the despicable hoard, large as it is; perhaps a gentleman of so much patriotic principle may be allowed not only to possess it in this world but carry it to the next; try the experiment,

and if it fails, leave it to the loving wife who has deserted you—my sweet-souled stepmother—or any one else you please; she at least would not be likely to forfeit it by an attempt to save any one from the gallows, not even yourself! But spare your feelings in future the scorn I must entertain for any man who thinks that pecuniary feelings, in such a case as this, would guide my conduct either one way or the other. Here, Jonathan," and, striding to the door in unmitigated rage, Charles repeated the name of his clerk until the latter made his appearance. As soon as Kickup came into the room, and the door was once more shut, Charles pointed to Sir Job, and said, "Do you see my father, Jonathan?"

"Why, yes, sir; a gentleman of his size isn't easy to be overlooked with two pair of candles in the room."

"A truce to your nonsense, sir," said his master sternly; "I am going to charge you on a matter of life and death, and, as you shall answer to me for any neglect, see that you are able to render me a good account of your service, not only to the letter but the spirit of it. The misfortunes that have happened to my brother have so deranged my father's intellect as to have upset his sanity, and put him upon schemes that would prove the ruin of us all. Allow him to have communication with no one, except by my permission, and on no account allow him to go beyond this room and the room within, his bedroom; and," bending his head to Jonathan's ear, and then in a half whisper, so that, while it wore the air of confidence to Jonathan, it might yet be heard by Sir Job, "see that none of the other servants come near him, and don't allow to be passed into his room any knives or other instruments that may be used for self-destruction. When Mr. Doubtful wants to pass out, let him go alone. Now come with me," and, before the father could recover from the amazement into which he was thus thrown, Jonathan and his son had left the room, and he actually heard turned upon him the lock of the door that kept him close prisoner within his own house.

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## CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SECOND.

### SHOWS THE GREAT CONVENIENCE OF A LEECH.

The baffled rage, the fury, the surprise, the mingled chaos of many passions, that filled the mind of Sir Job, as he reflected on the daring step which his son had taken, are totally beyond our humble powers of description. Like the favourite and faithful type of a hot-headed Englishman, the bull, he paced the den in which he found himself thus suddenly and unexpectedly imprisoned, and to all the muscular fury of the maddened monarch of the pastures, he added the self-irritated torment of a mind naturally intemperate, and long accustomed to the gratification of its own will. Now one project possessed him, now another; he looked at the windows, but finding himself on the second floor

of a lofty house which he had temporarily hired, all hope of escape from that quarter was resigned; he then gave utterance in violent exclamations to his sense of the burning wrongs and indignities that had been heaped upon him; finally he appealed to Doubtful, and in one breath sought for approbation of himself, condemnation of his son, and advice for the future as to the course he should pursue.

To Dick Doubtful, the tenor of whose life had glided away, far from all collision with such fiery spirits as those he had just seen in combustion, and who being an only and orphan son was not quite up to the little diversities of family happiness, the past scene had conveyed such an unmitigated feeling of astonishment, that he had as yet far from recovered from its electrical effects. The only results produced by Sir Job's appeals, therefore, were the still deeper plunging of his hands into his breeches pockets, a still more fearful corrugation of the brows, a still more solemn and deliberate assertion that upon his word it was a very delicate case. "A very delicate case indeed, Sir Job. You see there are so many modes of viewing the matter, that, upon my conscience, I don't know what to say to it at all."

Such a speech was just the last degree of scorching fire that could well be added to an already excruciating burn; and when the fiery citizen heard the parrot phrase which he so well knew come forth, he looked at Dick and then at the window, as if he felt very much inclined to pitch Master Doubtful out of it, and not daring to trust himself with words, proceeded to pace up and down his den as before. But though sorely humbled, though fearfully angered, the obstinate spirit of the ancient Briton was strong within him, and he resolutely resolved that no effort should be left untried to defeat his rebellious son, and carry into effect the high-principled but somewhat quixotic project which he had formed. After an interval of several minutes' silence, he began to sound Doubtful as to his notion of the intended rescue, and endeavoured to instil into him his own notions on the subject, insinuating, as he had already said to Charles, how ill it would become a barrister to connive at any breach of those institutions with which he was so intimately connected by his glorious profession. But this took as little with Dick as it had done with his friend.

"You see, sir," said Dick, in his usual exceedingly cautious and polite way, "one of the leading features distinguishing our branch of the profession, is our entire disconnexion with and abhorrence of everything that is connected with the executive part of it. Even the judge who sits upon the bench, and is obliged, *ex officio*, to pronounce sentence, would shrink with horror from the least participation in seeing it carried into effect; it is an odious branch of government, from which Heaven has luckily set us free, and with which we think it one of the greatest blessings that we have no occasion to interfere."

In fact, Dick gave Sir Job to understand he would much rather go to Jerusalem with unboiled peas in his shoes, than have any participation in the Brutus-like projects of the lord mayor. His lordship, on the other hand, made it visible to Doubtful with equal celerity that he thought such sentiments little less deserving of the gallows than the

murder of which the unhappy Paul had been found guilty. Dick, very wisely, therefore, asked if he could be of any use to the citizen, and being told that the latter wanted nothing, except to speak with his solicitor, Mr. Wrynecker, Dick promised forthwith to despatch that functionary to his assistance, and departed.

As Doubtful made his exit by the door, Sir Job seemed to watch for an effort to get out too, if this could be effected without any loss of that civic dignity, of which, even in his sleep, he thought he could not be too jealous. But Jonathan discharged his duties of sentinel extraordinary, in the most inimitable manner, and Sir Job, seeing that his escape was impracticable, resigned himself, like a true martyr as he was, to the continuance of his imprisonment.

In a few minutes Wrynecker arrived. "Now," thought Sir Job, "I shall master that rebellious boy at last. Wrynecker, my faithful friend and servant for many years, will at once see the justice of my argument, and the necessity that exists of rescuing the honour of London's chief magistrate from any participation in this infamous conspiracy." Full of these sentiments, Sir Job at once launched into the depth of his argument with still more eagerness and force than he had previously used to his son; long and loudly did he expatiate on the necessity that existed of adopting the course in question. He spoke very touchingly of the anguish he felt at being in such a position, but still professed himself unable otherwise to avoid the dilemma in which he was placed. He then complained, with equal warmth and bitterness, of the part which Charles had taken; and finally, as a matter of course, commenced the instructions as to how Wrynecker should take a post-chaise and four, and, hurrying up to London, present to the home secretary a letter from himself. He then kindly intimated that Wrynecker should take some refreshment while he indited the epistle in question. Here, unfortunately, however, his designs received a check. Charles knew very well that Wrynecker could be safely trusted, or else he would never have been allowed him to enter the room of the state prisoner. Something of this he began to suspect, when Wrynecker, after several preparatory hems, expressed himself unable at present to comply with his friend's request. This led to an explanation, and when Sir Job found that Wrynecker was as unwilling as Doubtful had been, his vexation was extreme.

"On your allegiance as a true subject, Mr. Wrynecker, I insist upon your going." Here Wrynecker expressed his sorrow that his view of allegiance should differ from Sir Job's. He then tried him on the score of his being his solicitor, and as a matter of business, whereupon the worthy owner of the leather breeches still more positively declined any such employment, and expressed his readiness, with whatever regret, to place at the citizen's disposal the retainer under which he had acted for him. Sir Job's mortification was now complete, and giving Wrynecker a stately look, and one of his most courtier-like bows, said, "Then our interview, sir, is ended," and extended his hand towards the bell. Wrynecker having duly returned this courtesy, took his departure.

Sir Job was now fairly puzzled. Humbled as well as irritated, he began to fear that he might absolutely have to give in, a practice to which he was in nowise accustomed, and which lost none of its bitterness from its novelty. After turning over in his own mind who was the most complaisant person of his acquaintance, he determined to set one stratagem against another, and try if he could not fairly outmanœuvre the enemy. With this view he rang the bell, and on the appearance of Jonathan expressed himself seriously indisposed, and desirous that Dr. Bamboozle should be sent for by post express. To complete his designs, he began undressing himself for bed, ordered some hot water and pills, and put on all the outward show of an invalid.

Charles, who became naturally alarmed lest the altercation which he had had with his father might, as was natural at his age, have brought on some affection of the head, at once expedited the express to Bamboozle, and, thinking that his father had submitted, looked for the Doctor's arrival with some impatience. Some hours after midnight, the professor of the healing art arrived, and being shown to the room of Sir Job, the latter commenced anew his rhetorical efforts, and seemingly with more success. The little eyes of Bamboozle sparkled with a double share of their usual cunning as he heard the citizen detail the strait in which he was placed, and when the latter had made an end of his case, pretended to be in almost as great a dilemma as his patient. In his own peculiar way the Doctor expressed himself sadly agitated between his wish to oblige Sir Job, and the great delicacy which he also felt in being accessory to the last offices of the law. He admired very much, he said, the case of Brutus; but as the practice had been all changed since that time, he did not well see how he, who had no feelings of relationship to mortify, could gain any credit by turning informer. Being routed by the eloquence of Sir Job from this position, he then bethought himself of the great injury his patients would sustain; whereupon Sir Job, desiring him to consider the Home Secretary as his patient, expressed himself quite ready to pay such a sum as would be a handsome fee to a physician of his eminence for so distant a journey, besides all expenses, &c., &c. This, Bamboozle said, altered the case *in toto*—of course he could not refuse to go on professional duty to see so distinguished a patient as the Home Secretary, and taking up his exquisite sugar-loaf hat, he expressed himself ready to start.

"Stay," said Sir Job; "write a prescription for me before you go, as that will serve to cloak our design; while you do this, I'll write my letter, and be sure to tell Mr. Charles Periwinkle, as you leave the house, that absolute quiet is necessary for my case." Bamboozle agreed in the policy of these instructions—the prescription and letter were written—the anxious inquiries of Charles answered in accordance with his father's instructions, and Bamboozle set off in the chaise which brought him, unsuspected of the mission on which he was employed.

At the first post-town at which he arrived, he ascertained that a fresh carriage and horses could be procured, and sending back the one he had used, that no tales of his route might be carried by it, he waited

twenty minutes till they had fairly departed, and then ordered another on the route to London. During the interval of his stay, he entered the coffee-room, where a very sharp dispute was being carried on between an enormous and sinister-looking man, and another passenger who had just got off a night coach, respecting the merits of the pressgang. Both were condemning it very loudly as one of the most atrocious anomalies of a free state; but while the bulky blue jacket could concede nothing in its favour, his fellow disputant, though he admitted its present infamy, thought that at one time it might have been necessary towards the manning of the navy. Bamboozle, with his usual love of making himself conspicuous, and interfering in everything, entered at once most markedly and wholly uninvited into the argument, and taking up a ground opposed to both, resolutely maintained that the pressgang had not only originated in a positive necessity for its operation, but that it still was a very desirable and commendable mode of manning the navy. This brought upon him the united fire of both the disputants, the blue jacket, of course, being the most fierce in opposing him; and when the Doctor turned to get into his chaise, concluding his sailor's argument with a very personal assertion, that none but a helpless old bachelor who had no ties to break, whose strength wasn't worth desiring, or whose profession exempted him from the fate, could ever sit down to defend such a system, and that, finally, it was sincerely wished that he, Doctor Bamboozle, might have an early taste of it. Laughing heartily at this, to him, most absurd idea, as well as at the rage of its utterer, the Doctor jumped into his chaise and drove off.

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## CHAPTER THE THIRTY-THIRD.

### THE EXECUTION.

The morning of the execution at last arrived. Sir Job had kept his own counsel as to the step he had taken, and satisfied in his own mind that he had done his duty, his whole soul was now engrossed by his struggles to suppress those twinges of remorse which memory and affection still inflicted on him. It was true that he had received no reply to his letter, no intimation of what fate had befallen Bamboozle. He, however, felt assured that the money held out to that worthy individual would insure the success of his mission; further occupation on this point was excluded from his mind by the agonising parting with his son. At an early hour in the morning, he had to bid adieu to the latter, who, heavily ironed and vigilantly guarded, was driven from the jail of the county town to the place of execution, where the murder had been committed—where, alas! so many of Paul's happiest days had been passed. With the last words that passed between himself and child, the latter reiterated the most solemn assurances of his innocence, and seemed only grieved that Nora had not as yet arrived in

time to bid him farewell. With Lady Periwinkle and Julia, the bitterness of parting had been passed the night before, and leaving Sir Job in a paroxysm of grief, he set out on the last journey of the condemned.

We are told by ancient superstition, that happy is the corpse the rain falls upon. We know not if the same felicity applies to those who may be said to arrive at the next stage to this dread consummation of mortality; but if so, this was the only happiness the unfortunate Paul experienced. The rain descended in torrents; the wind, in violation of its usual custom, swept and roared through the deserted streets of the county town, moaning among the forest of chimneys, and volleying down in sudden gusts, at every turning of the way. Perhaps out of some consideration for his family, or some unauthorised commiseration on the part of the local authorities, Paul was conveyed in a postchaise, his drenched escort riding before and behind, and grumbling sadly at the differences in the defences against the weather of themselves and their prisoner.

On the road to their destination, Paul's chaise, which was of a very venerable construction, and was somewhat heavily laden with his keepers and himself in irons, is said to have broken down twice. Be that as it may, this fact is clearly recorded—that the afternoon was already drawing to a close when the melancholy cortège halted at the place of execution. Paul looked from the carriage windows—but one terrific object seemed to engross his sight—it was the tall, gaunt gibbet—the growth of the last fatal night, which had arisen to deform a scene where Nature, in some of her grandest and most lovely forms, had hitherto reigned supreme. He saw not the restless and eternal ocean rolling in its fierce waves upon the strand below—he had no eye to recognise the wild beauty of the rocky shore, which plunged down hundreds of feet to court the contest of the sea—the well-remembered valley—the graceful woods—the sweetly-scented lanes, where he had so often rambled with Nora,—all these pleaded with their unobtrusive beauty in vain for his notice.

The chaise had halted on a wild heath, that crowned the loftiest promontory in the neighbourhood: there had he often roved with her and his cousin Jack, the cause of all this anguish, when the golden blossoms of the gorse proffered their incense to the senses, and their beauty to the sight;—there had they lain, hour after hour, with their dogs sporting round them, and the neglected pages of their books fluttering in the wind,—their souls vibrating to the most tender and exquisite emotions of which humanity is susceptible, watching, as they reclined, the changes of the heavens reflecting the sea, and speculating on the destination of the various sails sweeping up and down the Channel, the homes of those "who go down to the sea in ships, and have their business in the great waters." All this seemed forgotten;—one image, one object alone seemed to engross every sense; every energy was devoted to, every feeling was absorbed in contemplating, that leafless tree of human growth, on which his palpitating limbs were so shortly to be given a prey to the fowls of the air; presently, the chaise was turned

a little, and deeply embowered in the woods, and gloomy as if mourning at the misfortune that had befallen its owners, his eye caught sight of the peeping gables of Berrylea. For the first time, his fortitude seemed shaken, and throwing himself back in the chaise, and closing his eyes, it required every effort to prevent the burning tear from stealing forth—the noise made, however, by the preparations for his death, roused him from his reverie. The yeomanry had now been drawn up in regular order around the gallows; and, dense as was the multitude, they were thus kept at an efficient distance, while a complete circle was formed about the gibbet and the carriage, leaving room to the executioner and his assistants to do their detestable office.

While matters were thus proceeding, and during the little delay which was necessary to complete the last odious arrangements, some men in the garb of sailors, and others bearing traces of a nautical breeding without its dress, were observed courting the intimacy of the soldiery, by pulling out flasks of liquor, which went as merrily round as if the drinkers had been at a Scotch funeral. Presently Paul observed a solitary horseman, of a somewhat singular figure, make his appearance over the hill, and ride quickly forward to join the group surrounding the gallows. Something, though our hero scarcely could tell what, irresistibly drew his attention to this object.

The horse, on coming sufficiently near for observation, had evidently been ridden hard, and scarcely seemed to possess a dry hair on its coat. The queer figure that surmounted it came up, puffing and blowing, and as red in the face as a scarlet-runner, wearing altogether an air of breathless haste and impatience, that involuntarily riveted Paul's eye upon the new comer. Surely, thought our hero, I have seen that man before; yet it never can be possible that Dr. Bamboozle, who owes so much to my family, should allow his curiosity to lead him to such a scene as this; and with this reflection, as the cause of it became hid from view, the train of thought that had accompanied it died also. Paul's eye, however, had not deceived him. The queer-looking rider was indeed Bamboozle, though he had taken some pains to escape observation; and, instigated by the same feeling of modesty that dictated this step, he no sooner arrived amid the crowd than he dismounted from his steed, and giving the care of the latter to an idle urchin, made his way up to the commanding officer of the cavalry.

The chaise door was now opened, and Paul, still accompanied by his jailers, was made to get out. While the under-sheriff was offering to him the last attentions which it was in his power to bestow, the hangman put up his ladder against the arm of the gibbet, and ascended to make fast the rope. Disengaged from every earthly tie, our hero, with his gaze fixed on the ground, silently engaged in the last worship of the Deity: involuntarily, and as a matter of custom, he raised his eye to that firmament which, from its wondrous beauty, we are accustomed to associate with the infinite Creator, and though he could scarcely be said to give his attention to the fact, still as he did so, he beheld the executioner ascend step after step, while the gallows, as the lever increased, trembled in proportion. At last, just as he was about to

extend his arm to fix the fatal noose, a sudden crash was heard—the whole fabric was seen gradually to yield—and down came both the gibbet and the executioner with the utmost violence to the ground.

The confusion occasioned by this fall was indescribable. Some of the soldiers who had narrowly escaped being crushed, now impelled by the instinct of self-preservation, naturally gave way. The dense mob, the pressure of which had already been so difficult to withstand, now seeing the accident and hearing the cry, rushed tumultuously into the severed ranks, and soldiers and citizens were in a few minutes inextricably mixed—to complete the confusion, it at the same moment became too evident that the greater part of the former were more than three-parts drunk.

Exhausted by their long and wet ride, during which they had received no sustenance, the sailors round the foot of the gibbet had been incessantly supplying them with raw spirit, which they seemed to be drinking themselves, but which in reality had been drugged; we can scarcely therefore feel surprised at its having taken the rapid effect it did. No sooner was the support of the continuous line taken away from the yeomen, and themselves and their horses mingled promiscuously with the mob, than all discipline seemed to be lost, and the riders scarcely able to keep their seats; while on the instant that the under-sheriff beheld the fall of the gibbet, his whole attention was arrested by his underling, the hangman:—"Pick him up! pick him up! see that he is not hurt," cried he, rushing towards the fallen man; and stooping over his body, which lay amid the splinters of the gallows and the ladder, they raised him, bleeding and senseless, from the ground. Bamboozle, who was still cowering under the commanding officer's wing, here stepped forward, while the rest gave way, that he might examine the poor wretch more minutely, but it was all in vain; the head was forcibly bent forward on the chest, and the vertebræ severed with the blow; and he who came there for the base wages of blood, to dislocate the neck of another, now lay a lifeless and disfigured corpse upon the contemplated field of his atrocity.

While the spectators around the body were expressing their horror, one of the assistants, who had observed the stump of the gallows, ran up to the under-sheriff, and in a loud and agitated whisper said, "Here's foul play intended here, sir! the gibbet has been half sawn through." A violent clank of chains and a half-suppressed shout reached the ears of the official at the same time. "Look to the prisoner!" cried some voice aloud, but whether it was that of Bamboozle or the under-sheriff it was difficult to decide. Roused at the word, however, all eyes were turned to where Paul Periwinkle had been left. There he was no longer to be found, but several yards further down the declivity that led towards the beach, he was seen mounted, heavily ironed as he was, on the back of a powerful seaman, a body of whose comrades surrounded him, while the whole were rapidly and silently making towards a large boat that lay off the shore, with two hands in her, to prevent her being stranded by the breakers.

"A rescue! a rescue! Soldiers, to your duty!" roared the fat under-sheriff, as peaceably-minded an attorney as need be, but now

violently excited and alarmed at his unenviable position. "Sergeant, Corporal—form the men, and charge with me down the hill, to bring back the prisoner," cried the officer who commanded the detachment. But his men had as much notion of forming as they had of the Phœnician dialect, and were in a state to charge nothing but their glasses. One or two, however, did endeavour to second their superior, as he galloped down the hill with his drawn sword, showing infinitely more valour than discretion.

"Now's our time! Now's our time, my boys!" cried the seamen, encouraging one another, and keeping a close compact double-faced body, as a few fled rapidly with their prize towards the sea, while the rest turned about to keep off their assailants.

"Cut them down, sergeant—down with them, corporal—aid the king's laws, my boys!" cried the officer, addressing those around him, who, disappointed at not seeing the execution for which they had waited so long, were quite prepared to render the troops every assistance.

"Out with your blades, my hearts of oak, and stand no nonsense!" retorted the leader of the blue jackets, as soon as he saw this disposition manifested by the crowd. No sooner did the shining blades of the sailors' cutlasses take the place of the bludgeons which the seamen had hitherto been content with wielding round their heads, than the mob fell back, and, as the sailors drew near their boats, prudently left to the military heroes all the glory of the day, excepting, indeed, one little gentleman, in whom the enthusiasm of the moment seemed to have banished a more natural discretion. "Never mind their swords, my boys! Never mind their swords," cried the little man, taking the utmost care not to practise the dangerous precept that he preached: "Only detain them a few minutes longer, and here comes help. Only keep them from embarking a few seconds more, and here come the regular cavalry," addressing the awed crowd, who still fell back, and pointing, as he spoke, to the summit of the valley, where the head of a heavy column of cavalry did indeed begin to show itself most rapidly; as with drawn blades and in the serried order and unbroken discipline of regular troops, they advanced to the charge at a furious gallop, at once fearful and beautiful. "Here they come! Never mind the swords of a handful of seamen," repeated the orator, whose back was turned to those whose force he thus described. "Here they come!" Scarce, however, had the words passed his lips, when a huge arm was passed round his waist, his light figure was snatched swiftly and irresistibly from the ground, and, despite of all his cries and all his struggles, he found himself borne rapidly off towards the boats. "Save me! Save me! Rescue me!" cried the civilian, stretching out his hands imploringly towards the yeomanry officer and the panting under-sheriff. But the latter had enough to do to carry himself; and when the officer did make a dash towards him, his sword was struck into atoms by a far more powerful hand, while, with a final struggle, the victim contrived to turn his head, and Dr. Bamboozle—for it was he—found himself in the grasp of Jack Alibi.

"Now, you little gallipot," cried the latter, almost squeezing the

life out him, " as you're so mighty fond of the pressgang system, you can't complain of having a touch at it yourself. Now my men," addressing his crew, " in with ye—in with you—into your boat, all of you—here come the sogers, all behind, as usual—in all hands—so, that's well—shove off—hurrah!"

As the final cheer left the lips of Jack Alibi, he leapt exultingly over the thawts of his boat, flung down the almost senseless body of Bamboozle in the stern-sheets, and seizing the tiller, put it hard-a-lee, as the furious and disappointed cavalry galloped up to the beach, headed by their officers.

" Give them your carbines, boys—fire into them—sink them—cut them down—stop them at all hazards," were the orders bellowed forth by the officer, and setting the example of their impetuous courage, the latter spurred their horses into the boiling surf, and while the spray from their plunging hoofs was scattered in the very face of the seamen, their glittering sabres vainly endeavoured to reach them.

" Be cool, my boys, be cool," cried Alibi; " prize your boat-hooks in the faces of those humbugs, and shove off." Taking the hint, the two bowmen allowed the foremost officer to come almost within sword's length, when suddenly and effectually thrusting at him with their boat-hooks, the powerful and unexpected charge tumbled the rider from his seat, and left both horse and man to look to their and danger the advance of their comrades. The vast sheet of the boat's lugsail soared at the same instant to the rushing breeze, and away dashed their little bark over foam and over billow with the swiftness of magic, leaving behind the discomfited soldiery, and bearing to the schooner, that lay-to in the offing to receive them, the rescued Paul and the captured Bamboozle, while the few straggling shots which the weather suffered the cavalry to discharge, awakened only the derision of those who had ever been accustomed to consider themselves invincible upon their own element—the glorious sea!

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## CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FOURTH,

### THE CHASE.

Scarcely had the lugsail been hoisted in the boat which conveyed Paul from the land, when a king's cutter in full sail was seen to sweep round the furthermost point of land to windward, and bear down upon the schooner, hove-to and waiting for the boat. " Blow, good breeze," cried Jack Alibi, as he saw the approach of the cutter, whistling and addressing himself to the wind, " let us have a capful, and plenty of it. That king's craft no doubt has a notion that she is going to overhaul us in a quarter less no time, but we shall soon see how that is when the breeze comes in; it lies for once in the right quarter; and though we have so many hands on board, let us once get them under our lee, they may then try and find out which is the

softest part of a lee-shore to lie upon." Shot after shot from the carbines of the military played round the boat, as Jack said this, some of them falling short upon her lee-beam, some of them whistling over her, others falling in her wake astern, and a few playing like porpoises before her bow. With all this fire, only two balls passed through her lugsail, while another wounded one of the crew in the shoulder. "Go it, my hearties," cried the men, who were crowded together in the bottom of the boat; "this smacks of the old times, and if you're not very good marksmen, you make plenty of noise at any rate." At this moment the schooner was observed to make sail, and run down towards the spot where the boat was sustaining this heavy discharge. This assistance and shelter was not to be refused; her substantial timbers once put between our hero and the shore, Paul Periwinkle began for the first time to believe that his escape was probable. "Stand by to lower away the lugsail," cried Alibi, as the schooner and the boat ran down the bay in parallel lines, the former guarding her less substantial companion from the fire of the soldiers. "Now, my lads, out with the tow-rope, and give it a cast on board." Away flew the long coil to the decks of the schooner; a hand on board secured the end of it; down came the swelling lugsail of the boat, the canvas was quickly gathered in, and the long-boat hauled up on the weather quarter; Paul and the seafaring part of the crew clambered on board, and nothing but Bamboozle was left exposed in the stern sheets of the boat. As it was veered astern, he had the satisfaction of finding himself a mark for his warlike friends, the dragoons, on shore, while the schooner swiftly darted along, her speed increasing every moment as the wind freshened her sails. A more formidable assailant remained, however, in the king's cutter astern, who, firing guns to attract assistance and crowding all sail, seemed bent on the capture of the smuggler, and fully aware of the unlawful addition made to her crew. When the unhappy Paul had time to reflect on this new danger which had arisen to windward, all the horrors of death seemed once more to gather around him with tenfold intensity, and, making up his mind for a recapture, he believed himself only rescued from one danger to fall a prey to others still more distressing.

"Never mind that barking bulldog astern, sir," said Alibi, tapping Paul on the shoulder, as he observed the anxiety with which he regarded the king's cutter. "I wish I was as sure of a hundred thousand pounds as I am of landing you in spite of her. If she wouldn't kick up that infernal noise with her popguns, and give some other craft a chance of laying hold of us, I'd soon let her know she'd caught a tartar."

"Perhaps you might," replied Paul, "if I were not on board; but my unlucky star seems too powerful for any assistance to overcome."

"Well, here's for a try, at any rate," said Jack; "and if so be, sir, you're at all used to the seas, I'll put you up to a manœuvre you won't forget for some little time. Do you see that speck of white, upon the weather quarter of the cutter, no bigger, as it might be, than a man's thumb?"

"Yes, I see it; but how can that help you? It is nothing more than a little portion of white cloud."

"Lord love you, sir, there's a squall brewing there heavy enough to capsize a frigate, if it caught her without shortening sail. Now, the game that I'll play the king's craft is this—I'll make a long leg right away for this fog bank on the weather bow; the moment I put my helm down, mark my words, if the cutter don't do the same; that'll take her right up in the eye of the squall, and if they've overlooked it in their hurry, the chances are, you'll see as pretty a turn-the-turtle as ever a land gentleman wished to set eyes on. Well, then, again, if they sees the squall, and shortens sail, I, who am three miles to leeward of 'em, can contrive to get up upon their bow, and so crib the weather-gage before the squall reaches us. Once snug in that fog-bank, we'll soon contrive to give 'em the slip."

Had our hero ventured out to sea under any other circumstances, the motion would have made him violently ill; now, however, the scene of excitement and the approach of danger, banished every sense of bodily ill, and left at him at perfect liberty to witness the manœuvre which followed.

As Alibi had foretold, the helm of the schooner had scarcely been put down, and her sails trimmed for her new course, when a corresponding movement was observed on board the enemy, and away both vessels shot to seaward. The foam flew from their bows in showers of spray, as they darted over the dark rolling masses of water, their canvas coming out in bright relief against the clouded sky, and their spars and hulls careering frightfully to the blast that hurried over them. No other sail was within sight—the forms of the disappointed soldiers ashore, gradually melted into the receding distance;—the long line of land grew less with each departing second, and, saving a flight of sea-gulls that swept the hollows of the waves for prey, their harsh cries coming mournfully down the wind as they circled round and round the schooner, the whole surface of the ocean in all its wild loveliness and grandeur seemed left as the arena on which the rival barks were to strive for mastery.

As Paul stood by the weather-main shrouds of the schooner, his heart and eye exulting in the scene before him, and his spirit rising with every gust of the fresh gale that wooed the blood to his cheek—he forgot his own danger for the moment, and thought only of the stern delights which a sea life offers to a reflecting temperament.

At every bound the schooner gave he seemed to feel as if some favourite steed were beneath him whose labours he pitied, and whose courage he loved. Dark blue masses of water dashed irresistibly along the decks as, every now and then, a sea of unusual magnitude came rolling down upon her bow; while the long, slender hull lay quivering for an instant in the vexed trough of the waves, from the violence of the shock; and, then, with still more daring impetuosity than ever, once more launched forward in her impetuous career.

It was evident that the smuggler was rapidly drawing ahead of the king's ship.

"He doesn't like it, sir—he can't bear it," said Jack Alibi, coming

up to Paul; "he's going astern, sir, and he knows it, tho' it's a fast craft that, any day in the week. Now, see how we'll put his Paddy up—'twould be slow work to outsail him, tho' we're doing it hand over hand. I want something quicker for my purpose. Please the pigs, before long I want to make the coast of Ireland. I wonder if I can't 'tice 'em to set a little more sail; 'twont be many minutes before that squall's down on their weather-quarter; if I could only see him clap a bonnet on his mainsail to meet it, 'twould do me a wonderful deal of good! 'Tis a pity, too, that so fast a craft as that should go to the bottom, loaded with nothing but king's officers—however, there's many a better fellow there before him, so here's to try for it. Gaff!" cried Alibi, turning round to his first mate, "set the lace veils;" then, turning round to explain to Paul—"'tis a cant term, Mr. Periwinkle, which we have for some fly-away canvas that we set in squally weather, to mislead gulls like that young gen'leman to windward. It's made very white and light, with the threads so far apart as to hold scarcely any wind, and yet, at a distance, it looks as if we were crowding more canvas, and generally leads the enemy to do the same. Then, if a squall comes, like that one away yonder, our stuff blows off like a cobweb, while theirs buries everything before it."

As Alibi gave this explanation, his mate set on the schooner a couple of these gossamer staysails; and, certainly, to the eye they quite conveyed the cheat he had intended. By this time the schooner had drawn about a quarter of a mile ahead of the cutter, and no sooner were the white decoy staysails seen on board the latter than, as Alibi had predicted, the former proceeded to spread more canvas, in hopes of gaining her lost ground.

Already staggering from the extreme pressure upon her spars, the cutter was now seen to plunge violently at each succeeding puff of the increasing gale, every moment burying her bows beneath the seas, and evidently losing rather than gaining ground upon her chase.

"Go it, my boys," cried Alibi, as soon as he witnessed the success of his manœuvre. "I thought the white rags would stir the pride of ye. I wouldn't be outdone if I was you! There she pitches to it! There she goes bows under! She won't stand that long, I know, or else she'll be having her bowsprit alongside her to leeward, before she knows where she is. That won't do for me, or, worse still, perhaps she'll be shortening sail. Hurra!—there comes the squall, moving gloriously down to leeward, and she right in the wake of it. Hang me, if I think they see it yet! Here, Gaff, my boy, let's give them something to draw their attention this way. Quick, for the soul of ye! cast loose the bow popgun, and begin firing away. Anything to keep their eyes here. Bear a hand—make haste!—The rest of the hands stand by to shorten sail—we shall have 'em as nice as ninepence. Now, Mr. Paul, look sharp, and you'll see some sport! Here, my boy, give me the helm. Huzza! my lads!—well fired from the bow—that shot's just under her fore-foot—a little more elevation, and quick as ever ye can bring to bear. Well done!—now again! There comes the squall. Hang me, if they see it! There, the fools go answering the fire! That shot's

no go. The cutter plunges too much to do anything, but waste good iron. Only keep to that, my king's men, a minute or two longer. Look!—look!—look!—Mr. Paul! there comes the squall. There it's caught her—there she has it. Bravo! right on the bow. Ha! her helm's down—she'll escape. No—She won't—away goes her bowsprit—she won't come to—off she falls! There go her peak and gaff halyards—The mainsail 's choked in the throat. Ha, Mr. Paul, there she goes! Look! look! there she goes—*she's over!* Now let 's have a care at home. Here ye are, my boys—be steady—up with the helm—clew up—haul down—let go all—never mind the canvas, we'll scud for it—off she falls—tight little craft! We 're all right, my boys—see to the hatches, and don't get washed overboard. Hand the canvas as well as you can—here it comes, roaring like thirty thousand sea devils. Where's the cutter now, Mr. Paul?"

As Jack Alibi said this, he turned to our hero, whose eyes had long been intensely riveted on their pursuers. The moment he beheld the lofty spars and sails of the king's cutter overthrown, like a baby's cock-boat, by the terrific violence of the wind, every feeling but deep sympathy vanished from his mind. For an instant, in a temporary lull of the blast, he thought that the cutter was about to right again, as momentarily lifted by the huge seas around, he distinctly saw her spars and hull raised against the vivid patch of light, from which the whole fury of the hurricane seemed to be poured down.

It was but a temporary delusion. Gathering additional strength from its brief pause, the squall again rushed on. Down went the cutter once more on the tormented surface of the water. Paul's anxious eye traced or fancied the dark specks of human forms clinging to it with the instinctive agony of parting life. A moment more, and the swell of the sea lifted them once again against the sky, and then down they sank beneath the world of water, leaving no trace of their existence but the foam that raged and bubbled over them, and the piercing shrieks of agony that came tempestuously to the ear!

Paul heard not the terrific howl of the blast as it approached in all its alarming grandeur—he saw, but marked not, the curling angry crest of the mountain waves, that flew rather than rolled down upon the little schooner. His ear was filled with the death note of his ill-fated pursuers—his eye was still fixed in idle gaze upon the spot where in a single instant sixty fellow beings had found a grave, on whose brink himself and his companions still hung trembling, utterly uncertain whether or not it was to yawn for them in vain.

## CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIFTH,

### IN WHICH THE TALE REVERTS TO OUR HEROINE.

The course of our tale now leads us once more to inquire after the fate of our heroine, the lovely and unhappy Nora. Our readers will remember that early in our tale her uncle sent her over to Ireland with the unfortunate cause of all the suspicion and obloquy heaped upon her—the helpless infant, whose birth at the Grange had plunged every one around into such confusion and dismay.

Every distressing emotion of mind was added to illness of the most serious description; and while reason itself gave way beneath the pressure, life seemed almost about to follow. Some considerable time elapsed before these symptoms so far abated as to permit any allusion in conversation to what had already passed; and even when the mind was sufficiently composed to bear this excitement, it was with the utmost caution that she was allowed to indulge in conversation on a subject so interesting. On the arrival, therefore, of the messenger whom Sir Job sent to bring her home, she had only just arrived at that state of convalescence which would permit her removal. No words can describe the joy she felt on hearing from the lady in whose charge she was placed, the duty which the latter discharged, that, namely, of taking her in safety to her father. Not an instant was lost in preparing her for the journey; and almost ere it was begun, it had effected more benefit to the patient's health than all which her physicians had been able to accomplish. The place where she resided was near the sea-shore, with the family of a Protestant clergyman, whose sister was well known to Sir Job Periwinkle, to whose care she had been committed. This, then, was the lady selected to accompany her to England, and with a servant and her young child, full of the most eager hopes and expectations, they commenced their journey. As Sir Job had been fully cautioned that Nora's life depended upon her mind being kept in a state of quiet, she had not yet been allowed to know to their full extent the misfortunes which involved the family. As a means, therefore, of gradually preparing her for the awful scene she was to encounter, the cause alleged for her return to England was the excessive illness of our hero. Far as this was from the dreadful reality, this intelligence was quite sufficient to excite in her bosom feelings of excessive alarm; and whatever sentiments she might entertain towards Paul from the suspicion connected with his cousin, this at least is certain, that she still entertained affection sufficiently strong to cause the most poignant regret for his present situation, and awaken the utmost anxiety to reach him. To her agitated mind every moment of delay seemed not only fraught with a thousand evils, but of an immeasurable extent. Nothing, therefore, could exceed her delight at once more finding herself on the road, and anticipating, by the transition of the mind, that speedy meeting which her present mode of travelling so poorly represented.

In their route they had to pass through the town of W———, and nothing seemed more tedious than the delay with which they approached it. Among the many causes of disquietude which had disturbed the family with whom she had been residing, was the occasional appearance of a suspicious stranger, in the capacity of an unlicensed admirer of Nora.

Much as they had tried, from a description of his person, to find out who or what this unwelcome visitor might be, their efforts in this behalf had entirely failed. All that the neighbours knew of him was the fact of his sudden appearance among them, and his taking up his quarters in the only apology for a tavern which the little fishing village afforded. From this post it had been his custom to keep a constant *reconnoissance* on every movement made at the vicarage. Poor Nora he had waylaid in several of her walks; and when, from this annoyance, she had ceased to take them, his audacity had even led him so far as to try for an introduction to the family of the Protestant curate in whose family she was living.

Fearful, however, from his preceding conduct, that nothing but evil could result from admitting him as a visitor to the family, Mr. Roebuck (the clergyman) had forborne to return his call or afford the slightest facility to those views which he appeared to entertain. Nor was this line of conduct less adopted from the suspicions raised by his conduct, than that natural distrust which his appearance inspired. In height he was about six feet, and broad and muscular in proportion, but his face was frightfully marked with the small-pox; his lips were thin, and firmly compressed, till they gave to his countenance a look of determination amounting to ferocity; his nose was small and *retroussé*, while a large green shade completely obscured his eyes from the scrutiny of beholders, and left only two small and glittering specks, that completed the sinister aspect of his visage.

In addition to these grounds for distrust, he introduced himself by the name of "*Smith*," an appellation which, by universal consent, however honourable in itself, has been regarded as the rogue's alias from a time to which the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. This some of our readers may consider mere prejudice, but all we can say is, that such dissentients cannot have lived in those troublous times, when every magistrate of high heraldic claims or British principles held the cognomen of Smith sufficient ground of suspicion for committal. Be that as it may, the present holder of that choice appellative no sooner found himself defeated in his attempt to gain admission into the curate's family, than he had recourse to the usual resort of lovers in distress—namely, the pouring in of letters without end.

As these were written in a disguised hand, Nora felt perfectly unable to offer any clue to the real identity of her correspondent; yet still she could not help believing that his figure was familiar to her eye, but she was equally at a loss to say when or under what circumstances she had previously seen it. Twice during the time that she had resided in the curate's family he had made his appearance at the inn, and now, for the third and last time, he had preceded by two days the letter which recalled her to England. Not the least, therefore, of her

delights at quitting Ireland, was based upon the joy of getting rid of his persecution; which had arisen, seemingly, without cause and almost without an object.

Not that "Smith of the Shade," (as he was called, to distinguish him from others of that patronymic) was the only suitor which Nora's loveliness had obtained for her in this wild region—the fame of her good looks had spread far and wide.

To stifle impertinent curiosity, she had been called the widow of a naval officer, who had lately fallen in action. This at once accounted for her grief and all the peculiarities of her situation, and raised for the supposed orphan and bereaved mother an amount of public sympathy, which proved a dangerous addition to that extreme beauty which had already proved so fatal to the peace of its possessor.

The name under which she had been thus mentioned was O'Halloran, and numerous were the admirers who would each of them have been too happy to persuade her to change it for his own. This circumstance, perhaps, diminished in some degree the alarm which the curate's family would otherwise have felt at the pertinacious admiration of "Smith of the Shade;" but now on her departure, every fear was forgotten, and it was thought that himself and his forced attentions would be alike left behind, and all concern on the subject was dismissed.

As for Nora, never in her life had she looked more beautiful than on the brilliant morning which witnessed her departure from the rectory. The strength of returning health, combined with the delight of change, and that vague anticipation in which its approach leads the steadiest of us to indulge, to give colour to her cheek and a freshness to her eye, which those around her had hitherto only known from mourning their absence. In her arms she held that smiling treasury of love, in which all the wealth of a mother's heart is garnered up—her first-born child; from this every solicitation had been used in vain to make her part; for powerful indeed must be the motive which induces the parent to resign her helpless infant into the hands of strangers.

As she sat in the carriage, which was to take her on her journey, with the ruddy little fellow lying in her arms, and her cheek brilliant with the tears that wavered between sorrow and delight, breathing adieu to those friends, whose happy but humble hearth had afforded her a home, when all the world beside seemed falling from her, it would have been difficult for the friends around to have foreseen the sorrows yet in store for that sweet face of hope and gentleness, or, indeed, to have pictured for her future life any other course than that which she so well deserved—one of the most perfect happiness, affection, and tranquillity. But how often in life are we not compelled to exclaim with the heart-stricken Othello, "Who shall control his fate!" That of many seems formed for all that is most joyous and delightful, that of others is apportioned for all that is most trying and severe; and if hundreds in the robes of gladness, swell the ranks of the triumph and the festival, thousands and thousands are garlanded with flowers, that mark them only as the sacrifice destined to fall at the altar.

## CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SIXTH.

### THE VICARAGE.

The sun was fast descending towards the horizon, as the carriage containing Nora Creina and her attendants drew up at the gate of a beautiful residence that overlooked the sea. Coming, as she did, from the roof of one Protestant clergyman, she very naturally possessed letters to several others on her route to Cork, where she was to embark for England. The days in which she travelled were singularly marked by trouble and danger, even in a country where trouble and danger abounded. Particular care was therefore taken that the whole of her journey should be performed by daylight, and short easy stages were marked out for this purpose. Care had also been taken to provide her with as many letters of introduction to the various Protestant clergymen on her route, who formed, as may be supposed, the chief acquaintance of the Rev. Mr. Roebuck.

By this kindness and attention he had endeavoured to secure the comfort and safety of one in whose happiness he felt deeply interested: but it too frequently occurs in life, that the very means we take to accomplish our wishes, lead only to their discomfiture. The Rev. Mr. Merrion was a man of whom many people spoke in terms of warm commendation: these, it must be confessed, were all personal friends, who had shared the hospitality of his house and table, and felt, no doubt, strongly influenced by the personal *bonhomie* that marked his character. They were, moreover, mostly Protestants, and men, like himself, of substance, family, and standing in the county.

On the other hand, there existed a far more numerous class, who viewed him with every feeling of hatred and distrust: these were the poorer inhabitants of the surrounding country, who, educated in an opposite religion, felt as little inclined to exaggerate his good qualities as to palliate or pardon those of a less desirable nature. Among this class he passed for a haughty, overbearing, litigious man—one who had no mean notion of his own rights and importance, and was determined to exact them to the uttermost. Several squabbles in which he had unhappily got embroiled, on the subject of tithes, fomented the prejudice against him.

Of a strong mind, too ready to indulge in eccentricity, and too obstinate to resign any object for which he had once entered the lists, the observance of some little feeling against him, when he first came to take possession of the living, on a mere passing visit, determined him to a longer residence, in defiance of the hostile opinions which his first appearance had caused. Connected by marriage with a high Tory family, though one of little wealth, his tastes and connexions led him to keep up an expensive establishment, with no very great superabundance of means to meet it: the natural consequence ensued—

necessity, seconded by a disposition imperious, though not naturally sordid, in exacting the last farthing from those who were indebted to him.

Before he had long resided on his living, which was of considerable value, a large and increasing family added to his other items of expenditure, until at the period of our story he had become considerably involved in debt, without abridging any of those comforts or indulgences which led to this undesirable issue. A huntsman himself, his sons followed their father's example; and to judge by appearances, nothing was lacking, the possession of which affluence could warrant.

At first, having nothing to do, the vicar prudently kept a curate to assist him;—but finding that this was a needless attention to the souls of his flock, who in number were two less than the dogs in his kennel, the latter being a baker's dozen, and the former only eleven, he determined to pocket his curate's stipend, and do the duties of his incumbency *in propriâ personâ.* Whatever may have been urged against him in other respects, it must be admitted that he went through these labours without shrinking; and there is every reason to believe that he served his church with a daily service, alternately in the morning during one week, and in the afternoon during another, at least thirty or forty Sundays during the year.

At the time of which we speak, his eldest son was at Trinity College, Dublin, and his three younger daughters finishing their education in the same city; his wife had died some years before; and his younger son and eldest daughter received Nora at the door, with every welcome that the warmest hospitality could suggest. Mr. Merrion's rectory, when he first came to the living, was too dilapidated for residence; and having bled his numerous parishioners for the requisite funds, he built himself a new and spacious house in a more agreeable site than the former one had occupied.

The church, which is an old and venerable structure, stood on a high hill that commanded the sea, and had served for centuries as a landmark to the few stray mariners who frequented those shores. In a situation less exposed, but equally delightful in point of prospect, was the new square and substantial vicarage. A little ravine, crowded with shrubs and trees of varied beauty, offered the most exquisite sight and shelter to the house. A commodious road led down behind to the village, and in this direction was the entrance—the stables and other offices were disposed on the right and left, in a little paddock through which circled the carriage-drive: the principal windows of the house commanded the exquisite view of the sea and the sandy cove beneath; while the rocks leading down to the shore had been formed by the hand of Nature into a succession of rude terraces, which the taste of the vicar's family had filled with the choicest flowers.

The vicarage itself was trellised on the southern and western aspects, and covered with the jasmine, rose, clematis, and passion-flower. The drawing-room, running the whole length of the house, had windows opening upon the close-cut sward, which, pierced with flower-beds in

fantastic shapes, seemed like a ground of velvet embossed with all the loveliest colours of the prism. On either side, the flowering laurel, the holly, and that favoured plant of Irish growth, the strawberry arbutus, grew to a surprising height, and formed a natural wall of surpassing beauty. The view in front was bounded by the clear transparent line of blue, where the southern sky seemed to forbid the azure bosom of the sea from further exposure of its beauty, and presented an ever-varying magnet to the eye, which felt loth to resign the contemplation of a subject always changing and ever new.

As if every charm in which the senses can delight had been showered here by fortune, a beautiful little mountain stream broke over the brow of the neighbouring rock, and dashing from point to point in innumerable cascades, poured the wealth of its waters along the flowered terraces, and then fell in a single jet to the sea. When the summer months had brought their beauty, and the listless gazer lounged at the open windows of the drawing-room, the babbling of this tiny streamlet contributed the most felicitous music, and mingling with the more distant murmur of the sounding ocean from the shore below, offered up a harmony that might soothe the least quiet mind: while the moon threw over the peaceful sea a broad stream of silver, and the rising night-breeze whispered through the laurel boughs, laden with the sweets of a thousand flowers, the entranced beholder might have dreamed that he lived beneath the fostering skies of Italy, more readily than that he simply shared the bounteous gifts of enjoyment which Nature has showered on an island, that Britain owns, only to injure and condemn.

It was a spot apparently formed for all the most peaceful divinities of life: the thrilling ecstasies of love, the calm elevation of study, the harmless delights of music, the absorbing pursuits of painting, the healthful recreation of sport which the abundant fish and wild fowl offered to the resident—all that constitutes the praiseworthy recreations of an intellectual mind seemed designed for cultivation in so blest a retreat. On the other side of the picture there lay the holy duties and avocations of existence—the godlike cause of charity—the manly assistance of our fellows—the elevating instruction of the ignorant; there lay a population almost uncounted in numbers, stricken to the very dust by poverty, revelling too often in crime, and unexceeded in ignorance and wretchedness! Where could life be passed in more calm philosophical delight to its possessor on the one hand, or more useful and worthy labours on the other?—But Heaven bestows opportunity, and man misuses it!

As soon as Nora had arrived in the room commanding the view we have attempted to describe, and gained from the kind welcome of her new acquaintance a moment's time to look around her, she seemed for an instant lost in surprise, whether most to admire the beauties of the scene spread at her feet, or those which beamed with so much kindness at her side, where Eveleen Merrion was assisting to disrobe her of her shawl, and pouring forth those words so delightful to a mother's ear, which proclaimed with rapture the beauty of her child.

But whatever beauty Nora saw in her own boy, it did not lessen in her eyes that which beamed in the face of the elegant girl, who had taken it from her own arms, and covered the happy little traveller with a thousand kisses. Nora looked and looked again at the face that hung over her infant; and never till then had she formed a notion, so she thought, of how entrancing a creature a woman can be.

Nora herself, as our readers will remember, was delicately fair, with deep-blue eyes, and hair of the darkest hue and finest texture. In Eveleen Merrion she beheld everything that was most the reverse. With a face certainly as handsome in its style as her own, though not so feminine, and with a very different expression, her complexion was clear as the colouring of Correggio, but of the darkest, richest olive, the red blood glowing and lightening up beneath, with an effect truly beautiful; eyes large, and lustrous as the lama's; features that a sculptor might have worshipped; and hair whose luxuriance seemed to oppress the beautifully formed head that bore it. In figure she was even taller and larger than Nora herself; her voice had a merry mellowness of tone, that made a friend wherever it awoke an echo; while in her face there was a frank but fearless decision of character, which was only allayed by the half sarcastic smile that lurked around her lips, and the espiegle glance that answered it from her eye;—all these charms were endeared and heightened by the intellectual openness of her forehead, and that extreme look of youth which the ripened beauty of her form tended in vain to lessen.

The first expressions of pleasure at making one another's acquaintance being passed, Eveleen rose to show her new friend and guest her room. Some visitors were at this time staying at the vicarage, and she apologised to our heroine for placing her in a little chamber within her own. But this was a form which Nora little heeded; she was not sorry to have her friend near her, and was delighted to find that her window overlooked the sea. The first troublesome results of her journey having been gone through, in arranging her dresses, &c., the two girls remained waiting at the window till refreshments were announced below. Their gaze was naturally fixed on the outspread waters before them; and while thus occupied, a beautiful schooner came standing past the easternmost promontory, and ran for the anchorage in the bay.

Nothing could be more perfect than the proportions of this vessel's hull and spars; the former lying long and low in the water, like some native inhabitant of the element over which she flew, her masts rising gracefully, tapering away with a degree of rake that seemed to threaten their fall over her stern, while every sail, exquisitely cut in form, fitted beautifully to the yards, and stood full and white as the most precise seaman could desire. The breeze was gently blowing upon her quarter as she appeared, and she shot along to her anchorage with all the swiftness of vitality. Sail having been first shortened, and then furled after the anchor dropped, a little low boat was hoisted out, and three men rowed ashore.

The shades of evening were now falling rapidly, and having watched

the proceedings of the schooner thus far, our fair friends turned from the window to seek the drawing-room. While their time was passed in further cultivating the acquaintance they had made, ours must be given to watch the boat from the schooner.

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## CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SEVENTH.

### THE DEVIL'S GUN AND CAVERN.

Declining to take the nearest point of land, the row-boat pulled away for the tall threatening cliffs that lay to the east of the vicarage. By the time it had arrived within some hundred yards of these, the last rosy glow of sunset had faded from the sky, and the bright blue vault, with its myriads of globes, like the false courtiers of a fallen monarch, had sworn allegiance to another suzeraine. The moon, which was nearly at her full, rose slowly and magnificently from the waves that were silvered by her radiance, throwing broad, black, massive shadows from the impending cliffs on that part of the bay to which the boat was directed. While it still lingered in the moonlight, its figures were distinctly seen—two labouring at the oars, and a tall bulky figure steering—a toil which they lightened with snatches of a song, that came mellowed by the falling waves to the strand.

The sea, from which we last parted in a moment of tempest and horror, now lay calm and unruffled; and each long, gentle swell that threw its sparkling waters on the strand, fell with a low sweet murmur on its pebbly bed, followed by a noise not unresembling a heavily-drawn sigh, and speaking to the pensive listener like the voice of long-departed years.

By that lonely and beautiful shore nothing of life seemed stirring but the boat upon its wave; and the quick, sudden, measured jar of the sculls awoke a startled and unusual echo in the place where the Genius of Solitude was supreme. Presently the boat shot within the shadow of the cliff; its sound still continued, but the only trace of its progress left for the eye was an arrowy line of fire shooting from its bow, and gradually dying away astern, as the phosphorescent bubbles raised by its keel once more subsided into quiet. Beneath the promontory towards which it steered, a large vast cavern opened on the sea, which rolled its black flood far into the bosom of the rock with a wild discordant thunder.

Even in the brightest days, the light scarcely penetrated its extreme recess; while the boiling of the tide over its sunken rocks, and the eternal dripping of the water through its jagged roof, heightened the horrors of darkness, and presented a scene so frightful, that few cared to face it. At the end of the cavern, a large tabular rock projected over the sea, that still rolled beneath. Here, to all appearance, the cavern terminated; but this was not so. Under the table which we have

mentioned, and which was about forty feet square, a hollow chamber existed, which the lowest state of the tide never exposed: this burrowed on in a horizontal direction until met at right angles by a round fissure in the solid rock, that penetrated several hundred feet to the surface above. From its circular proportions, many have supposed this opening to have been a well, dug in former times for some forgotten purpose; but as this purpose is not very easy to trace, others have imagined it to be a natural formation. If well it was, however, it was in all probability excavated with a view to obtain fresh water by some fortress above, and naturally enough resigned on finding that it unfortunately struck upon a hidden inlet of the sea. The result, however, which followed was markedly singular: the waters pent up in the cavern below found a ready exit by this vent, and when the storm rolled upon those coasts the whole swell of the Atlantic, the sea, forced by the immense pressure of the ocean behind, was driven furiously into the cavern, and there its compressed volumes, rushing up this shaft, shot themselves to a height not unfrequently of seventy or eighty feet above the surface. The noise produced by this singular cause was so powerful as in some states of the weather to have been heard at the distance of thirty miles.

Popular superstition, which is so active in Ireland, had bestowed the name of "The Devil's Gun" upon this singular spot; while the same gentleman, who has been so extensively consulted in British nomenclature, bestowed also his choice appellative upon the cavern below. Many a wild legend was extant of this spot. At all times of the tide, when the sea was calm, access could be had to the cavern by means of a little skill in clambering; but few of the neighbouring peasantry ever availed themselves of this privilege.

Superstition and history had combined with fiction to bestow on it every legendary honour, and its haunts were chiefly resigned to the seafowl and the smuggler, and those who had not even so legitimate an excuse for frequenting it. No doubt, in barbaric times, when men were happy to possess even caves in which to live, so singular a fastness must have been dedicated to some occupation; but now the peasant crossed himself as its gloomy and lowering entrance met his eye, or the subterranean thunder of its gun came upon his ear. The fisherman, too, who plied his lonely calling in the midst of death and danger, willingly inflicted on his tired arms an additional mile's labour, to give the Devil's Cave a wider berth; for there, as stories went, some secret and inexplicable current drew in the boat of the incautious mariner, and sucked him down to the regions of perdition.

Those, however, who now so boldly rowed into the jaws of the enemy, were for the most part strangers, and only saw in it one of those wild freaks of Nature which abound in the sailor's path at every turn. The steersman, it is true, knew each story that had been told of it; but they seemed to produce little effect upon his mind, as he boldly steered towards the centre of its grand and melancholy arch, giving, as the sound of the oars awoke the echoes of the gloomy vault, the word of command to cease pulling, and the boat, proceeding by the way

already acquired, shot gently forward upon the black glassy surface of the scarcely undulating water.

Drip! drip! drip! was heard in the far recesses of the cave, as the damp rocks condensed the vapour that had been distilled upon them, and thus gave a frightful life and voice to solitude and silence. Still as the boat glided onwards, bright fiery lines of phosphorescent light shot off from her bow like electric sparks, and gathered in her wake. The spirit of the place seemed now asserting his fell dominion in the bosoms of the hardy rowers; they moved not—scarcely even breathed—and the hard-set inspirations of their breasts, and the loud pulse beating agitatedly beneath it, proclaimed what was passing in their minds. Suddenly the silence of this dismal spot was disturbed by a low hoarse voice abruptly demanding—

"Who's there?"

"All's right," replied the steersman, who seemed to recognise the tones. "Go you and stand at the right landing-spot, that I may steer straight for you: a man might as well go sailing in ———, as try to navigate a craft in this dark hole; I can't say I am over fond of it."

"Tut, man!" replied the other, "it answers the purpose of those who wish no one to know of their meeting; so run your boat in, and clamber up; there's a side rope already rove, and though it's a little of the wettest, it might hang a heavier rogue than you any day. Come on, and I'll throw a light a-head of you." As the speaker said this, a sudden bright red ray shot forth upon the jet-black waters, with such strong and instantaneous effect as for a few moments to be painful to the beholder—a sudden scream was heard, and then a heavy rushing noise.

"Lord deliver us, what's that?" exclaimed several of the seamen as the light was instantly shut up. A dead silence followed, broken only by the plashing of the water and the boat beneath, the dripping from the roof of the cavern, and the continued rushing noise. "Oh, I know what it is," resumed the man with the lantern, suddenly turning round the full blaze of its light towards the entrance of the cavern; and there, high in the roof, fluttered an enormous gannet, disturbed from its repose by the talking and the light, and now in its alarm vainly endeavouring to find the mouth of the cavern, and escape.

"Knock him down!—knock him down!" cried one of the men, snatching up an oar, and vainly endeavouring to strike the bird as it circled round the cavern in a state of terror above them; but the height was too great and the blade of the oar too short by many feet to reach it.

"Leave that tomfoolery alone, unless you wish to fall overboard," cried he of the dark-lantern; "we didn't come here to play the fool with wild fowl; let the poor devil go." There was something so surly in the tones of the speaker, that they seemed to compel obedience in his hearers, and, putting down their oars, the sailors drew their boat to the landing-place, and the steersman walked off, to have a private conference with the man he came to meet. The light was now once more extinguished, and the sound of their compressed voices echoed strangely

in the dark cavern, while the reflected moonlight, illumining the waters at its entrance, rendered still more violent the dismal contrast of its internal shadow.

"You have been so long, I thought you were never coming," said he of the lantern; "I don't know how often I have trudged down to this bay within the last week."

"He who depends on the gallows," replied the other, "has what the lawyers would call an uncertain tenure; and if you'd fallen in with as sharp a gale as we had to start with, ten to one if you'd been here even now."

"Well, well, it's no use to look back; I have watched the game down at last. All's right here; the pretty bird has come to roost on the rock just overhead. I have got a rare set of boys ready to storm the nest to-night; all that we have to do is to carry her safe off afterwards. I'm to have my little one all to myself, on condition that I give up the rest of the rookery to them; and they are welcome to it, for I never loved a tough hen when I could get a young chicken, though I must say there's as dainty a little bantam up there among them as a man need desire, but God knows what they're going to do with her—something rough, or I'm much mistaken."

"Very well," replied the steersman, "that's no concern of mine, so I don't want to know anything about it; I always minds my own sailing orders, and any other craft may steer as she pleases. Have you got the money ready for this job, as you promised? If so, I'll keep my share of the bargain, and land her as you desire; if not, this is an ugly business—I have plenty of fish on my hands to fry besides yours, and shall make sail to-night while I have a fair wind."

"What an avaricious rogue you are!" exclaimed the other, with much passion and several oaths. "Do you think I keep my word as badly as yourself? I have the money all safe; and if you do your business well, I'll give you a handsome present over. Here's the first portion," giving into the steersman's hand something that sounded like a purse of gold: "the moment you've got her safe on board, you shall have the second; and directly you've landed us where we agreed on, I'll pay you the remainder."

"Well, sir, that's acting like a gentleman, as I always believed you to be. As for avarice, I confess that few men would sweep h—cleaner than myself for a proper price; and for the roguery of the matter, I don't see much use in the devil calling his mate black."

"Well, well, never mind; I only spoke that at random. Have you got your men already armed?"

"No, I haven't; that's soon managed. What's your plan of attack?"

"Why, it requires some care. The old fox, though he has a black skin on him, knows right well how to use his teeth and claws: the best way, therefore, for our purpose, is to take him asleep in his den; but as he sits up late, and has several men-servants in the house, my boys are to find their way down and ambush in his grounds about two o'clock: the moon then will be getting low; I shall have scouts about

the house to listen for their going asleep, and as soon as you see a blue light burnt half-way down the cliff on the lowest terrace of his garden, then pull straight for the shore with muffled oars. I have found out which is the place to board the enemy with the least chance of resistance; I'll meet you on the beach, and we'll soon settle the business. When once I've got my prize in tow, I shall leave the other boys to do what they like with the old one; that's no concern of mine."

"Certainly not, sir, certainly not. 'Tis a well-arranged plan of attack, and will make a very pretty little skylark for my lads to begin their hands upon, and prevent any of them trying to desert, as after this they can't expect to live very comfortable, like, in the old country."

"To be sure, it's the very thing to suit them; but mind you come with trusty dogs, that won't shrink at a little tough work. How many are you going to bring ashore?"

"Why, how many do you think you'll want?"

"Oh, I should think about a dozen good blades that you can rely on, besides yourself, will be enough to put this business straight."

"Very well, sir. Then as soon as the blue light burns, you may rely upon us."

The conversation, which had taken place upon the square table of rock at the bottom of the cavern, here terminated, and the steersman turned to depart. Retracing his way carefully along, like one who fully knew the dangers that surrounded him, the other, once more opening his lantern, threw the light upon the rugged pathway, and gave to view all the horrors of the spot.

From the roof depended a thousand stalactites, caused by the drippings of centuries; and these, acting like natural prisms, refracted the glittering rays in every gorgeous tint of colour from innumerable points, while the slowly undulating surface of the jet black water reflected them once more, unvaried, unrelieved by any object that spoke of humanity, except a little skiff, that still hung on by the landing-place, and the pallid faces of the two wonder-stricken and shivering seamen, who seemed fixed upon its thawts.

Gliding into his boat with all expedition, the seaman once more took his place at the helm; a villanous look of mutual understanding passed between the two principal actors in the scene; the word "Give way" was uttered, the light extinguished, and the dingy slowly pulled down the dangerous cavern to the open sea.

## CHAPTER THE THIRTY-EIGHTH.

### THE SEA NOVICE—WHO IS HE?

Not a word was exchanged by any of the three seamen in the boat until they reached the schooner's side: the necessary order being given to veer her astern and overhaul the tackles for hoisting her up; the tall sailor then unshipped the tiller, with which he had been guiding her course, and jumped on board.

"Is Mr. Limpit on deck?" cried he.

"No, he's gone below to have his tea," replied an old sailor, who seemed to have charge of the deck.

"Tell him I want to speak to him," was the reply; and in a few minutes Mr. Limpit made his appearance.

The last was a handsome-looking youth, of the middle size, well-made, and dressed in a plain blue jacket; but there was something in the manner with which he trod the deck, which, despite of his apparel, seemed to belie the notion that he had been brought up to the profession of the sea; while altogether there was about him, moreover, a look superior to the class of those beings with whom he was mingling. The brow was open, intelligent, and candid in the extreme; the eye fearless and confiding; and in the expression of the face were the traces of extreme melancholy, which spoke the endurance of much sorrow in times past.

"Mr. Limpit," said the sailor, on gaining the deck, "if you have made your mind up to embrace our profession, there occurs to-night a capital opportunity of trying your hand. I am obliged to go ashore on a little cutting-out matter: it is but a mere trifle—a lover who wants to run off with his sweetheart. I shall take on shore with me twelve of the best hands, and shall feel much obliged by your commanding the barkey in my absence. I have no doubt the men I shall leave on board will behave well enough; but in case of any row occurring, if you will fire a pistol or a musket, I will be off again directly. I shall want my mate to go with me, or I would not trouble you."

"Oh, as to that," returned the other, "you need make no apology; even if the voice of necessity were not so urgent as it is, my mind has not altered in the choice of my profession, and I shall be most happy to take charge of the schooner while you land. It is a duty which I much prefer to going on shore myself, where, to say the truth, I have had quite enough of adventure to last me for a whole existence; therefore you may go in all confidence that nothing shall be neglected in your absence."

"I am much obliged to you," returned the other, who was the captain of the schooner. "As that is the case, I will now give orders for the expedition. Is Thomson forward on the forecastle there?"

"Pass the word below for Thomson," cried two or three voices, readily echoing the command. The word was repeated several times

on the decks below, and in a few minutes Thomson himself appeared. The worthy commander having stepped aside with his estimable second, the former asked, in a tone so low that it could not reach Limpit's ears, whether he, Thomson, were all ready.

"Quite so," replied the other. "All that I now want to know is, how many men we shall require."

"Eleven, besides yourself," was the reply; "but no chicken hearts among them. I expect we shall have bother enough already as it is: for the girl is to be brought aboard here; and how we shall manage to keep it from the knowledge of that youngster on the taffrail, I don't quite understand."

"Does not that one ashore know that the youngster is aboard here?"

"Devil a bit; he would be as wild as a young hawk. He thinks he is hanged and buried long ago. There is where the difficulty is—to keep that youngster from finding out the girl, and that bully-boy ashore from finding out the youngster."

"O, never mind, if that's all; we have managed more ticklish jobs before now; and the way that I propose to do it is this:—We must tell the youngster that this is some mere every-day love affair, which is common enough among these Irish people; that all the schooner has to do is to land them, and take no further part in the matter. Then we can get the girl down under hatches, and persuade the big bully that one of our crew served under him in the pressgang service, and will be sure to know him again. This will be quite enough to make him keep under hatches also. We can easily manage to keep the youngster out of the way at the landing; and so, bagging the money on both sides, nobody can be a bit the wiser."

"Why, yes, it would do, if we could carry the game on so; but he's rather a rum covey, that ashore. If he should smell a rat—"

"Rum covey, be ———!" quoth the mate. "The sea is deep enough to hold them both, or all three, for the matter of that, if we have any of their nonsense."

"Avast heaving, my boy; that is coming it rather strong. Not that I have any rational objection to see a man or two walk the plank when their room is better than their company: but then you see that is only fitted for the tropics—here they kick up such a shindy."

"Well, well, I don't care how it is—whether it is one way or the other; but we must manage to keep them quiet somehow."

"Why, yes, we must manage that. Now go below; pick out the twelve men, and see they are all properly armed."

In conformity with the orders, or rather the wishes, that had been intimated to him, young Limpit remained upon the deck, gazing on the glorious scene around him. The moon was rising rapidly, and with a most gorgeous effect; and while the light and beautiful schooner rose gently over every swell, he paced the deck, wrapt in his own thoughts, and lulled by the pleasing melody as each wave broke upon the shore. The novelty of his situation, the sense of command for the first time undertaken, and some thrilling remembrance of the past, seemed fully to absorb every sensation of the mind.

As he gazed into the heaven above, the first pleasure of his emotions appeared to pass away, and thoughts of deep melancholy to assume their place. His eyes dwelt on the fairy line of horizon to seaward with a fixed gaze, as if eager to penetrate beyond its mocking boundary; the weakness of a heart that sighs for absent friends stole over his eyelids, and glistened in the moonlight; while the sweet sea-breeze, that scarcely ruffled the bosom of its mistress, whispered in his ready ear the distant sighs of those who mourned his unhappy destiny. The bold and rocky coast around him, frowning with its dark shadow on the bay below, was cold and stranger-like to his eyes, that wandered almost involuntarily towards the bright light and fairy spot that marked the vicarage.

"How happy, in a few hours," murmured he, "will be the lovers we are about to bear from that quiet spot! how delightful the first sense of uninterrupted security, while they yet form the world to each other, and no experience compels them to image the real troubles to which they fly!" How far this soliloquy was appropriate we shall see.

The captain, who had gone below for half an hour, here returned on deck, and informing Limpit that his charge of the ship would not commence till two o'clock, advised him to retire below, and take some rest till that period. This advice he followed. Too truly had he learned that sleep is the surest and oftentimes the only friend which misfortune is not certain to drive from the side of the unhappy. It pours the priceless treasure of its wealth upon the poor, unbought; it sheds its opiate upon the couch of agony when the leech despairs; at its magic touch, the straw of the maniac is turned to softest down, the dungeon and the fetter dissolve before its spell, and even remorse itself forbears to prey upon the victim whom its shield protects, while of all the luxuries of life it is the only one that pampered opulence never can command.

When Limpit had retired below, the captain took his place, and after walking the deck for half an hour with far different thoughts, wrapped himself in his shaggy coat, and lying upon the companion hatchway, where he could retain a view of the shore, took such broken rest as the nature of his engagement and his own thoughts permitted.

As the hour of eleven struck on the schooner's bell, the mate came aft, and reported every thing ready for the expedition. He then received leave to go below till two, while the captain remained, keeping that sort of dog's watch which we have described. As the night passed and the moon gradually sank, the effort to lie still became more and more troublesome. For a few minutes the seaman, pressed with heaviness, nodded his head upon his shoulder; then starting up fearfully, lest he had slept too long, would apply the small telescope lying beside him to reconnoitre the distant vicarage. There, however, still burned a few faint lights, which, interrupted every now and then by some dark object, assured the lawless gazer that his confederates still watched around the devoted dwelling.

How little, in the full security of their repose, did its inhabitants dream of those demons in the shape of men that lurked in the surrounding darkness! There lay beauty, innocence, and youth, upon the last

pure couch they were ever to enjoy, rapt in the first delicious slumbers of the night, indulging, perhaps, in dreams of love and happiness, which a few hours were to blast for ever. There sat the hospitable but thoughtless minister of Protestantism, intent only on the pleasures of the table and the conviviality of his guests; while, at a few yards' distance, prowled the reckless and uneducated peasant, in whose breast the long vexing question of tithes had stirred up all the implacable bloodthirstiness of our nature,—while, worse than all, one unpossessed of their excuse was ready to make them the fierce tools of his mingled cupidity and lust.

Gradually one light after another ceased to throw out its tiny ray upon the vast expanse of waters; at length the last remaining speck disappeared in the profound gloom of that beautiful little dell; the last hope of their preservation had disappeared—the last protecting angel had flitted from their side, and the eye of the seaman was obliged to trust to memory to point out the spot where the vicarage stood.

"It won't be long first now," muttered he, springing to his feet, to banish all further chance of sleep; and casting a glance overhead, to ascertain how the weather was likely to prove, the deep blue of the sky increased in intensity as the moon once more descended, while the countless lights that overspread its surface shone with all the bright intensity of a winter's night. The morning breeze, too, now gathering strength, sang mournfully through the rigging of the schooner, as it fitfully shifted round towards the south-west; and long fleecy clouds began to struggle in the distance, foreboding a recurrence of the storm. Suddenly an intense bright light shot over the whole bay, throwing into insignificance the subdued rays of the pale planet above, and bringing out in bright relief every point of the jagged cliff over which it streamed, and darting across its fearful radiance upon the dark bosom of the sea.

"All's right at last," muttered the seaman, as he drew a pistol from his belt, and blowing down the barrel, to see that it was not loaded, poured a little priming in the pan, and flashed it off, to show his confederates on shore that their signal was observed. This done, he ran quicky below to the hammock of his mate.

"Thomson," said he, laying his rough hand on the hammock, "all's ready now; bear a hand, and turn out, and get your crew into their boat with as little noise as possible; out oars, and hang on by the starboard quarter; when you're all ready, give a whistle, and I'll wake up young greenhorn to take charge of the deck."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied the mate, in an under tone, and springing to his feet, he ran on deck to obey his orders, while his leader went aft to his cabin, and buckling on his sword and a couple of brace of pistols well loaded, put over all a great pilot-coat, which hid from the view these tell-tale evidences of his guilty purpose.

This done, he sat down upon a locker, and quietly listened to the execution of his orders. With scarcely any perceptible noise, more than the careful shuffling of feet and the occasional clink every now and then of cutlass-hilts and pistol-barrels, he heard his myrmidons

descend into their boat, and the latter veered astern. A short low whistle was then distinguishable, and, going forward to the little cabin occupied by young Limpit, he entered.

With all the zeal of a devotee, the youth was sleeping on his cot in all his clothes, and ready to start up at a moment's notice. Following the captain to the deck, and rubbing his eyes, scarcely yet awake, he received the instructions of the latter to take charge of the ship, in conjunction with an old hoary-headed sailor, whom the captain cautioned to be obedient to his commands. These were simply to wait on deck till his return, and allow no one to come on board who did not answer his challenge to the countersign of "Liffey;" and in case any attempt was made forcibly to board the schooner, to repel it by equal force with the hands left on board, and, if necessary, cut the cable and proceed out to sea, heaving-to in the offing, when beyond pursuit, till he (the captain) should join them.

Fully impressed with the responsibility and importance of the post, the young man promised implicit obedience, and helped his senior to get over the quarter and lower himself down to the boat beneath. As soon as the foot of the latter was safely planted on the head-sheets, the guess-warp was cast off, and the boat, crowded with its grim and swarthy crew, dropped silently astern, so quickly that Limpit had no opportunity of observing who or what it contained; he just heard the captain step from thawt to thawt into the stern-sheets to take the tiller, and at the word "Give way," the little ark of villany shot forward over the waters of the bay, in the direction of the vicarage. As the captain had got over the side, young Limpit in parting had wished him success, and his thoughts still accompanied the crew on what he considered this pleasant little expedition of romance.

Once or twice he seemed on the point of altering his mind, and asking leave to accompany them; but perhaps his thoughts recurring to his own position, and a belief that the captain must have decided on the best plan, checked the application. Gradually the boat melted into the dark shadow which belted round the shore, and the last thing that he observed was a flash, produced in the same manner as the former one, and, like that, intended as a signal, which was answered by those on shore, pointing out the spot where the rowers were to land.

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## CHAPTER THE THIRTY-NINTH.

### THE VICTIM.—AN UNEXPECTED SURPRISE.

As the oars of the boat had been what is technically termed "muffled," they made no noise in pulling, more than the scarcely audible plash of their blades in the water,—a result produced by wrapping round them a layer of oakum where they came in contact with the rowlocks of the boat. As they approached within a few yards of

the beach, a low voice called out, "What boat goes there?" The answer as quickly returned was, "Yours." Almost immediately after, the keel struck the strand, the same figure appeared which they had previously met in the Devil's Cavern, and, holding out his hand, welcomed the captain on shore with every demonstration of delight.

"Everything is ready," said he, "if we can depend upon the men. Who is to keep the boat?"

"O, I've provided all that; never you mind. Here are twelve good hands, besides myself and the boat-keeper; and if a little hard fighting will do the business, we are ready for it—now lead the way. Follow me, my lads; let's have no mistake," addressing the crew astern, who jumped out of the boat one after another; and, taking the hint from their leader, the little column wound its way up the precipitous cliff by a narrow path, which the feet of smugglers had first worn, and where still a false step would precipitate the incautious maker upon his death below.

Arrived at the top of the rock, a few paces brought them to the edge of the rectory garden, which, unprepared and unprotected against any such attack, was easily entered. Here in the shrubbery they found a band of from twenty to thirty men, most of them with their faces blackened, and armed with clubs and staves, scythes, and such rude weapons as a peasant can command, while dispersed here and there among them were a few old muskets. These ruffians had a leader of their own, and a consultation was now held between the various chiefs in the surprise which was the best point of attack. They all agreed that one of the outhouses—the laundry—afforded the best point of admission, and thither they bent their way. Arrived here, one of the panes of glass was taken out of the leaded casement by a man who seemed to know the premises, and who put his hand through to undo the fastening. To his surprise, however, a strong shutter, which was rarely used, presented its barrier inside, and the window itself was bolted. While they were discussing what was to be done, one of the men, in turning round, accidentally struck the end of his pike against the glass, and two or three panes, demolished by the blow, came rattling down upon the stone pavement. A smothered curse of impatient anger from one of the leaders followed, and, almost in an instant after, a window was thrown up on the story above, and some of the sweetest tones of a woman's voice were heard, demanding,

"Who's there?"

"'Tis the young she-devil herself," whispered one of the peasants; "shoot her—down with her at once, before she wakes the family, Malony."

"Hush, for your lives," muttered the leader of the band in reply, dashing aside the weapon that was just going to be raised at the fair form of the eldest daughter, whose watchful ears had detected and whose boldness had challenged the miscreants surrounding her father's dwelling.

"Puss, puss, is that you?" continued she; then in a voice of half laughter, and as if addressing some one inside, she added, "It's only the

cat trying to get in, after all." Softly fastening the window as if afraid to wake the family, the wretches below, who were in the shadow, saw her in the pale moonlight close the hasp and retire.

Now, although her father was nominally the chief object of vengeance, she herself divided this feeling with him in no slight degree ;—a hatred the more intense and pitiless, as the object of it was beautiful and clever. This may at first seem strange, but it was indeed too easy of solution: through the surrounding neighbourhood she was celebrated, not less for the loveliness of her person, than the beauty of her voice and the readiness of her wit ;—the favourite of her father, she entered into all his views and feelings,—hunted with him in the field, and presided at the head of his table, where she filled the post of a mother whose care she had long wanted.

Educated in all the rankest tenets of the Orange party, she, with the thoughtlessness of youth, had incurred great hatred by writing some most taunting songs on her papistical neighbours, and had given them an unnecessary but strong additional virus by lending all the charms of her singing whenever asked to do so in any public company that permitted this illiberal and factious triumph !

While, therefore, she innocently imagined she was harmlessly exercising her own spirit of fun, she had in reality been marking herself out as a victim to fall by the side of her misjudging father. In addition to these unpardonable crimes, her education had been of the most masculine description: her brothers had taught her to embark in all their pursuits ; and while she boasted herself as good a shot as any of them, she had all the confidence which manly exercises inspire, without the physical strength to warrant it. It is true that her courage was indomitable ; but this perhaps only rendered more repulsive the harsher points of her character towards those her inexperienced prejudice disliked.

Anything in the shape of a Catholic priest she thought a fair object for all her raillery and contempt ; while the lower orders of peasantry, too far removed from the village to share in that ample generosity of heart which redeemed the follies of her girlhood, heard only the exaggerated stories of her intolerance, and superstitiously believed her to be some beautiful incarnation of the Spirit of Evil.

This, then, will account for the feeling which manifested itself on discovering her at the window, and still more for that extraordinary presence of mind which she is well known to have displayed during that awful night, and to which we shall now endeavour to do justice. It seems, that the moment she opened the window, her quick eye detected the moonbeams playing and sparkling here and there upon the weapons of the assailant party below. Convinced that the utterance of any sound intimating her consciousness of their presence would have been the signal for her own murder, the ready wit of woman seconded her own unflinching spirit, and put her upon the little ruse she so readily executed. While she still pretended to be calling to the animal she named, her whole mind was devoted to estimating as nearly as possible the force and character of the enemy : this done, she uttered those words which she pretended to address to some one in the room, with a view of further

confirming the deceit she had already put upon them. Without the loss of a moment's time, she then wrapt herself in a loose robe, and hurrying successively to the rooms of her father and brothers, rapidly communicated to them the state of the case, promising that while they roused their guests and servants to defend the ground story, she would keep up a smart fire on the foe from above: more especially she cautioned them to show no light to their assailants, and to act as noiselessly as possible.

With a view of bearing her own part in the coming danger, she returned to her room, hurriedly completed her toilet, and loading a gun and a brace of pistols, prepared for the desperate struggle which she perceived was coming.

In the mean time, her voice had no sooner been heard by the ruffians without, than, fully convinced by her manner that she had failed to see them, they all crouched down in the shadow where they had before been grouped, partly with the view of consulting what step had better be taken, and partly with an intention of again lulling the household in repose. Those who conceived they had a voice in the matter now in hurried whispers gave their advice. The captain, as the boldest and least scrupulous, proposed taking the house by storm; this the hero of the dark lantern discountenanced, and as Malony, the head of the Irish detachment, was also of the latter opinion, the wiser advice was lost: for some minutes the seaman contented himself by venting his disappointments in a low grumbling manner; suddenly he started up on his elbow, and with a suppressed oath exclaimed, "Hang me if that young devil, as you call her, hasn't roused up the whole ship's company! I hear them paddling about the house."

"No, no, you don't," replied the dark lantern; "lie down for ten minutes, and all will be quiet; so much depends on our taking them by surprise."

"Surprise!" growled the other; "the surprise will be coming upon us presently if we lie here like a pack of lubbers, when we might carry the whole ship by boarding at once. There—hark! I hear voices as plainly as possible; and there—hang me if there isn't a light through the chink of those shutters aloft."

"Is there? where? No, you mistake—or stay—perhaps they're coming down to let in the cat, and as soon as they open the door, stand by to rush through all at once, and the thing's carried.—Ha!—what's—" Before, however, the whispered sentence could be concluded, up went four of the windows of the vicarage on the story above, and, quick as thought, flash came a volley, from every muzzle which its inhabitants could muster, directly down into the angle where their assailants were gathered.

"There's your woman's cat for you! there's your surprise!" cried the captain, his suppressed rage all bursting forth. "Forward, my bully boys, and tear the house down." "Now then, my jewels, up and be doing," cried Malony, seconding the attack. "Steady all of us, and fire away with a good aim—never mind their threats," was the reply, made in the firm but gentle tones of a woman's voice on the floor above,

as, busy among the busiest, loading her discharged gun, the daughter set the resolute example of defence to the uttermost.

"Well done, my little Joan of Arc," replied her father; "one volley more, and we must leave you to command a couple of the men-servants, while we go down below, and receive those fellows on their entry. Make haste, Harry, my son—make haste, gentlemen, and give them another dose! the window below will stand a good surge or two! there's some rare old oak and iron on the inside of them, and if you can only pick off the leaders of the gang before they can effect an entrance, the rest will be glad enough to make their escape." Once more the whole party discharged the fire of their pieces upon the men below, and the suppressed groans and shrieks of the wounded proclaimed with how great an effect, while some already began to prepare for a retreat from a reception so much warmer than they had at all anticipated.

"Rally, my boys, rally and to it!" cried the captain, who had received a flesh wound in the side that only added the stimulus of pain and revenge to that of cupidity, "they are nothing but a pack of women and old men inside: blaze away some of you into the windows aloft, while we storm these below; break the glass with your cutlass handles, half a dozen of you, and drive the shutters bodily in; the rest disperse themselves round the garden, hide among the shrubs, and keep a sharp fire on the upper windows till we have gained an entrance." Obedient to the word of command, seven of the seamen remained to force in the windows, while the other four—for one had been already shot—hid themselves behind various points of the shrubbery, and thus in comparative security themselves, continued their fire upon the vicarage, which made it extremely difficult for those within to continue the gallant defence they had already so nobly begun. The Irishmen, in the mean while, who had suffered most severely from the first fire, set up a system of yelling and screaming that tended not a little to add to the confusion of the besieged; while, accustomed to act only in irregular warfare, and in a manner independent of each other, they dispersed in all directions to follow up a series of individual attacks: some, mounting the roofs of the outhouses, fired into the bedrooms of the vicarage, and one even obtained a footing within one of its chambers, where, however, a ball from the musket of a servant left him to pay the penalty with his life.

Attacked, however, on all sides, with their attention distracted to the uttermost, the defendants soon found that they had a most dangerous and difficult part to play: showers of balls bursting through every part of the windows, scattered on all sides broken fragments of glass, splinters of the shutters, particles of the furniture, and even fragments of the walls against which they struck;—while their enemies, remaining ambushed behind the shrubs of the garden, kept up a destructive fire, which they had no opportunity of either answering or avoiding. Every door of their little fortress shook with the rude blows of its assailants, and they scarcely knew from what quarter the fatal inroad might be made: on one point only was there any certainty, namely, that what-

ever was the principal object of the attack, it was one which concerned the life or death of the assailed; and knowing how infinitely preferable it was to fall in a fair fight than be left to the tender mercy of their captors, a degree of desperation gave to their defence an additional strength and fury which was hardly needed.

The only plan on which they could now act with any hope of success, was to guard the passages that led to the staircase, and waiting till their enemies broke in, rush upon them suddenly, and make a deadly struggle for it on the moment of their entry.

This, however, on the side of the storming party, was far from proving so easy a matter as they had anticipated. The outhouses, it is true, had all been forced; but then strong doors had been found to shut off every communication with the dwelling-house: the windows, therefore, presented the most likely chance of entrance; but, as if the vicar had felt a lurking presentiment of some similar attack, their shutters were proved to be made of strong oak panelling, banded with iron, and altogether of so stout a make as to present a formidable obstacle to besiegers who had only brought the ordinary arms of slaughter.

With all the cries of Irish rage, the peasants flung themselves against the large and beautiful panes of glass, heedless of the severe wounds and pain which they incurred in so doing, and anxious only to get at the fastenings inside; but here their further progress was stopped. In vain the butts of their muskets hammered on the wainscot panelling, and resounded with a frightful hollow sound through that beautiful drawing-room, which a few hours since was the abode of beauty, and adorned by everything that marked the reign of elegance and taste. In vain they even discharged their guns, with the muzzles pressing against the obstinate barrier, in hopes to blow it down before them—the house shook with a frightful report as the balls crashed through the wood, striking against the mirrors, chandeliers, and pictures inside, and sending a thousand splinters right and left, while the blast of the powder following through the aperture thus made, illumined with a fearful light the room within, only to leave it in more hideous darkness. There stood its brave little garrison, sheltered behind the intervening portions of wall between the windows, where they ran to load their guns, and stooping down on a level with the floor, as soon as these were charged, and firing back again through the shutters upon their assailants.

In vain the leaders of the latter outside, urged them to redoubled efforts—the gallant girl above, aware that the only hope of life depended on making good the resistance till succour should arrive from the village, seemed to forget alike the dangers of the moment and the weakness of her sex, and, with the most utter disregard of personal injury, cheered on the two servants who were with her to keep up an incessant fire on those below, and took herself the most active share in the defence she enjoined. Man after man was stretched wounded and dying, by the deadly hail that came down, at every few seconds' interval, from these windows;—in vain the party below grew more and more

desperate in urging one another forward to the attack; while nothing could surpass the awful contrast between the bloodthirsty outcries that raged outside the house, and the stern and deadly silence of desperate courage which prevailed within.

Uncalculating upon any resistance to equal that which they now met, the besiegers knew too well that every minute that elapsed brought with it a chance of assistance to those they had marked as their prey, and this increased the savage fury of these wretches, while each man that fell bleeding on the sward and flower-beds at their feet, tended to increase the panic that was already beginning to arise.

Wounded in several places, and the blood streaming from his face, the gigantic figure of the captain was seen moving from spot to spot, aiding and encouraging his underlings to the utmost, and deriding the force of those within—three musket-stocks he had already broken in attempting to batter down the drawing-room shutters, but cross-barred from angle to angle, as well as ribbed with broad strips of iron sheeting, he had never dreamed till that moment how strong the defences of orthodoxy might be.

Riddled in every part with shot-holes, and several large strips of the oak torn off, the barricade of the centre window already presented a most skeleton-like appearance: but in proportion as these insterstices grew larger, the opportunity for the besieged to take aim on their opponents was also increased, and once or twice the blasts of the fire-arms from within had volleyed forth their deadly and sulphurous breath so close to his face, that eyebrows, hair, and whisker were already scorched to a mere dust; while the face, smarting with the agony of the pain, was coated with the gunpowder, and presented nothing but a mass of shapeless black, relieved by the sparkling glare of two ominous eyes, the glances of which crossed each other at right angles.

"Back my boys here, two or three of you," cried he, maddened with the fury of disappointed rage and intense suffering, "and lend a hand to form a battering-ram for this infernal place."

Turning their backs on the vicarage, they retreated towards the shelter of the garden. "Fire on them as they retreat—quick, John and Philip—you won't get such a chance again," was heard in the exulting tones of the heroine above, as she not only watched this retrograde movement, but took every advantage of it. The forms of the sailors, hurrying across the grass plot, were distinctly seen in the waning light of the moon; one after another the three guns on the upper story were quickly discharged; and two of the seamen fell, never to rise again. The whole attention of the besieged was now turned on the body of Irish peasants who still continued to hammer away at some of the other windows; and as these were not so immediately under fire, it became more difficult to dislodge them. For a short time our friends hoped that the more formidable seamen had abandoned their attack, and the daughter was in the very act of sending a message to her father to make a sortie on this brutal rabble: while yet the words, however, lingered on her lip, she beheld the seamen in a body, now reduced to seven, rushing back in full force from the shrubbery, and bearing between

them, in the style of a battering-ram, a young tree, which they seemed to have torn up by the roots, and which was indeed a stout ash plant, whose cauliflower stem, with all its bulb of earth and fibre still clinging to it, they now brought to bear, at a hard run, against the already shattered window below.

"Quick to your guns again," cried the spirited girl, as she saw the impending attack; and levelling her piece upon the party, and followed in her example by the domestics acting with her, they once more poured a double-shotted discharge right into the midst of their assailants.

"O God! I am killed!" was distinctly heard in the tones of one of them as the fire was received; and throwing his hands up into the air, the body of the mate fell lifeless in the path of his companions, who, remorselessly trampling over it with a shout that rendered his death-groan inaudible, rushed furiously on to the point of their attack.

Already riddled in every direction with the shot and powder, the sorely-tried defence resounded hollowly to the blow of the novel but powerful battery; and though the cross iron bars refused to do more than bend to its strength, the woodwork gave way with a crash that sounded as a death-knell to those within; and the brutal assailants, pushing forward in a body, entered with a dear-bought triumph the carpeted retreat of gentleness and beauty.

Nothing now remained for it but sheer hard fighting, man to man—the shout of victory which the seamen raised, as they burst into the room, was the signal for the immediate gathering together of their assistant ruffians; and though the garden outside was strewed with no inconsiderable proofs of the desperate resistance of the household, seventeen furies, in the shape of man, still remained to consummate the dire outrage thus begun.

"Throw down your arms, or every one of you are dead men!" cried the captain, thrusting forward his gigantic bulk, and dealing death with his heavy cutlass at every blow; but no cry was heard for quarter from those who seemingly knew too well what kind of mercy was offered them to desire any further experience of it.

"Fight to the last, my boys! we shall still be able to make good the staircase till we are relieved," was the only reply made by the vicar's son,—alas! the only one left alive,—a strong and athletic youth, who, crossing swords with the captain, endeavoured vainly, amid the intermittent light of the pistols that were still discharging on every side, to detain him as his opponent. Again and again they exchanged thrusts as the weaker party retreated towards the staircase and the stronger followed; but this object was effectually foiled, and they were as often separated by the crowd, while, at every step of the gallant few, their wounds increased, and their blood dyed the floors of their own halls, till, weakened by hemorrhage, they sank exhausted beneath the feet of their ruthless pursuers, and were trampled undistinguished with the slaughtered of the other side.

On the first broad platform of the wide oak staircase they once more tried to make an effectual stand: the father, however, and several of his gallant guests, no longer lifted an arm in defence of the hearths whose

ashes were now quenched in their blood; the son, a few of the servants, and one or two friends, alone remained to oppose, with their desperate valour, the overwhelming force below.

In the mean while, the daughter had no sooner seen the successful issue of the last attempt at storming, and heard, from the horrible uproar of the fight, that the storming party had succeeded in their first object, than she kindly ran into the room where Nora and her child were lying, to apprise her of the danger, and put her on her guard. Formed, however, with a nature and disposition entirely different to her own, she found our heroine cowering beneath the bedclothes, and almost senseless from fright. With a kindness which in that excited moment bespoke the genuine excellence of her heart, she paused from the frightful contest of life and death, whose sounds gradually approximated, to reassure the trembling spirit with which her own could at first seem to possess so little in common.

Calling in two or three of the servants, and the lady who accompanied her, she implored them to hurry on some clothing and convey Nora to an attic above-stairs, where the temptation of plunder might never lead the ruffians to assail her. This no time was lost in doing; while the daughter hurried away once more to render all the assistance in her power to her sorely-pressed friends.

It was indeed time that assistance reached them from some quarter; for, reduced to the few we last mentioned, her elder brother and his faithful few were slowly retreating, step by step, up the stairs, replying to the offers of quarter with those keen words which belonged to desperation, and the sword alone.

"Cut him down, captain—shoot the young rascal!" were the cries vociferated by those below, who, having lit the rude links of tarred ropes which they had brought with them, now discovered, by the red light thus flung around, to how small a number the defendants were reduced. Eager as the cry was to annihilate these, the task was far more difficult than the command. What the son wanted in strength, opposed to his huge enemy, he fully made up in the superior skill of his weapon, and an equally determined courage. Weak as he was with the loss of blood and long exertion, his sword flashed right and left in the angry light of the torches below; and wherever an intruder seemed likely to turn their hardly-contested position, there its keen edge was sure to fall.

Four or five times had he succeeded in wounding the herculean leader of the attack; but to wound this huge mountain seemed like plunging his sword into a hasty pudding, that left no visible result behind.

"Climb up the banisters, some of you, and take them astern," cried the latter, his rage redoubling with every moment of this protracted resistance, and his fear of a rescue increasing in proportion. The young man heard the command, and turned his head to defeat it; but the point of his opponent's weapon wounded him in the sword-arm, and reminded him that all his attention was necessary for his own preservation. Getting outside the banisters, three or four of the

enemy, sword in hand, began climbing up, in obedience to their leader's orders. In vain the rest of the little garrison endeavoured to prevent this manœuvre ;—in proportion as its success approached, their opponents in front pressed more and more hardly upon them, and rendered it impossible to bestow their attention elsewhere.

"Hurrah, my boys!" cried the captain, "a few steps more, and you'll have them right astern; press hard on their bows, boys—don't give them a moment to turn round; climb along there, my lads, hand over hand—look sharp—there you are, that's high enough; now, jump over."

At this instant, when the flank of the household was on the very point of being turned, and all seemed irretrievably lost—don't give headmost seaman had already partly surmounted the obstacle, a gun was suddenly presented in his face, a bright flash flamed back the glare of the torches below, and as the loud report followed, three of the men who were trying this manœuvre fell senseless on the crowd below. Loaded with three or four balls, the discharge had taken a raking direction, and while the execution was so unexpected, the confusion it produced was equally great. Looking up, with a curse, to see who had thus defeated his project, the captain saw through the voluming eddies of smoke the determined but lovely features of the heroic daughter, who, heedless of everything but the danger of her family, was now loading her gun as rapidly as she could for further use—the sight seemed to nerve the assailants with still more desperate energy.

"Push behind, my boys!" cried the captain, waving his sword in the red light, and then discharging it heavily on the heads of those opposed to them,—"hurrah—*now!*—push behind bodily,—now with a will all together, and push these hounds before us up the stairs."

Quickly at the word his myrmidons wedged themselves fairly in behind their comrades at the bottom of the stairs, and by mere force of weight forced the defenders, step by step, up to the landing at the top. Here the immense numerical superiority of the attacking party became at once manifest, and had not their opponents fallen back to the open door of the chamber opposite, they would instantly have been surrounded and cut down: short as was their retreat, more than one of their number fell in its execution; and when the last stand was made at the door of the daughter's bed-room, the brother, one guest, and a servant, alone survived. Miss Merrion meanwhile had sought the shelter of the room before them: there, loading her gun as rapidly as the desperation of the moment prompted, she levelled its barrel over the shoulders of her brave defenders, and poured its deadly contents on their murderous assailants.

Three separate times had she taken a deliberate aim at their bulky leader, hoping that with his fall the rest might retreat. Some evil destiny, however, seemed to protect him; there he still fought on, the most desperate of all her brother's antagonists, as if charmed against the exercise of shot. At each trial her barrel was loaded with two and three bullets; and though it failed of its principal object, it still scattered death and dismay around.

Once or twice, amid the fearful fury of that night, in the pauses of the conflict, and while charging the barrel of her gun for fresh resistance, she paused to ask herself if this could be reality, and questioned whither had fled all that womanly horror of violence and bloodshed which marked her sex,—that fear of strife—that weakness of heart, which is the gentle and endearing prerogative of woman. To this some prophetic feeling seemed to answer that she must choose either between the lives of their enemies or her own, or perchance that violence which is as much worse than death, as the ignominy and agony of the gallows is worse than the repose of the dying chamber. All the energy of her soul was roused—all the bitter feelings of her heart were arrayed in support of it—even her conscience and her religion seemed to urge forward, not to stay, her destroying hand: and when hallowed by these emotions, a woman's courage is far more firmly based than that of many a hero who has left the light of his glory to hover like a rainbow of the mind over the bloody field of battle.

Rarely accustomed to see her skill as a markswoman defied, she determined to try the effect of a steadily-aimed and single bullet against the captain. Having loaded her gun with as much care as the frightful hurry of the combat allowed, she deliberately levelled it once more over the shoulder of her brother, and, watching her moment, fired.

True to her expectations, the fierce blast of her barrel vented itself almost in the face of her hateful object; a loud cry of anguish, a drooping of the head, and a staggering of the body, seemed to announce that he had received his death-wound. As the smoke rolled away, the blood was seen streaming frightfully from his cheek—for an instant the fight seemed suspended, and all eyes were turned on their leader. "Now's the time," whispered the elder brother to his companions, "now or never!" and springing forward with his sword, he plunged it through the bodies of two of his opponents before they even dreamed of his attack. But this was the last expiring gleam of their hopes: suddenly pushing aside his supporters, and uttering a cry of mingled rage and anguish, the captain, who had only been stunned by the daughter's bullet passing between his jaws, threw forth the fragments of teeth and bone with which his mouth was choked, and bleeding fearfully from his wound, he seemed to concentrate all his energies into a single spring which he made unawares upon the brother. The young man, imagining him killed, had advanced slightly forward from the post which he held before his sister's door, and was dealing his blows right and left. Unseen, unheeded, the heavy cutlass of the infuriated leader was swung back for its most powerful blow; with the malice of a demon in his disfigured countenance, and the concentrated strength and rage of a giant in his arm, the ponderous and gleaming blade circled swiftly through the air. The sister alone saw the danger—she alone made any effort to ward it off: the only weapon she had in her hand was utterly unfitted for the effort; quick as thought, she extended the barrel of her light shooting gun to meet the blow; the trenchant blade struck its soft iron with resistless force; like a shuttle in the hands of infancy, it flew round in her trembling grasp, and she—the doting, the fond, the devoted

sister—saw the remorseless steel of a blood-thirsty wretch she abhorred fall on the soft silken curls in which her fairy fingers had played from infancy—plough its bloody course through that beloved head, to her the model of all manly beauty, and passing down the fair and massive throat, bury its thirsty and remorseless point in the life-blood of that bosom on which she had hung, time out of mind, with all a sister's partial fondness and admiration.

She saw—and yet she fainted not—that idolized defender of her life and honour fall a bleeding mass at her feet: his gory and dissevered neck drooped part over one shoulder, and part over the other. For an instant she seemed transfixed to the spot, seemingly scarcely credulous that the frightful deed she had witnessed could be true: then awoke (if it had ever slumbered) all the woman in her heart; its softness, its fury, its despair, flashed forth by turns. Uttering the most piercing shriek, which in that dreadful night was heard above all the din of curses, groans, and strife, she sprang forward with the port of a young leopardess, as beautiful, as wild, as fierce!—Had she been only half as powerful, not a murderer of her brother that night but would have shared his grave. With a terrible desperation she thrust forward the muzzle of her gun, which she had again loaded, into the very breast of her brother's slaughterer, and, in defiance of his uplifted arm and reeking sabre, fired. But the Prince of Evil seemed to watch over his ready lieutenant; the soft barrel, previously struck by his blade, had been so nearly flattened, that now, when discharged, the ball was arrested in the tube, while the explosion behind causing it to burst, the only evil it produced on the tarpaulin-covered chest of the sailor was a severe concussion and burn from the powder.

Wresting the musket in a moment from the frail hands that wielded it, the last hope of the poor girl was gone!—One of her late brother's companions was shot down, the other taken prisoner, and the infuriated gang of miscreants rushed into the bedchamber of the defenceless girl.

Knowing, from the beginning of this awful night, how completely she shared in her father's want of popularity, she knew, from the first moment of attack, that no mercy would be shown to herself if taken; and this, added to her own masculine spirit and determined courage, had induced her to adopt the line she did. Long as the time may appear in narrating this struggle, it seemed but too brief in reality to those engaged in defending themselves, and often during its horrid progress had she reflected on the brutal lukewarmness of the adjoining villagers, who, although within hearing, had sought to proffer no assistance to those so much in need of it. Still, life is inexplicably dear, even after there is least left to enjoy in it, more especially when the questionable boon of existence is sought to be forcibly wrested from our grasp. As soon, therefore, as she saw that all the defenders of her father's hearth had been slain or taken prisoners, and the sanctity of her own chamber profaned by murderers, whose hands were reeking with the blood of her family, all further resistance she knew was fruitless, and the last resource for life was the desperate alternative of springing from

the window, and trusting to her excessive fleetness for gaining some refuge in the village. With a view to this last resource, she had purposely left the window open; and as the bloody footsteps of the throng passed over the threshhold of her room, the unlicensed fire in their eyes too surely proclaiming their fell intentions, she sprang at a single bound to the window-place, and in the very act to leap, one foot was placed upon the ledge. But at this fatal moment, Malony, the Irish leader, who had burst into the room with his black-faced and blacker-hearted ruffians, saw the first look she gave at this point of escape—sprang at the same time, though in a different direction, and firmly twisted his gory hand in the scarf that encircled her waist, just as she was in the very act of leaping to the ground. Without uttering a word or cry, she was dragged back and held by her execrable captor against the mantel-piece; she asked no question while the hideous and grinning satyrs gathered round her in a circle, breathing the wildest imprecations of vengeance and exclamations of delight, and triumphing as the fellest demons might be supposed to do over some fallen angel from the host of Heaven. It was a grand and fearful,—and if any spark of humanity had lingered there, except in her own bosom—a touching sight, to see that young and beauteous creature standing alone, circled round by all that was most hideous and revolting. The dark hair had escaped from its confinement, and fell in all the wealth of its unrestrained luxuriance on her dazzling throat and bust, which the exertions of the fight had slightly bared, and where, as it heaved tumultuously in answer to her throbbing heart, the ruddy glare of the torches arose and fell like the rosy hues of sunset upon the glorious sea, while the clear olive of her countenance seemed transparent to a fault; the terrible anguish she had undergone had left her cheek pale as some statue, but the lips still firmly closed with all the determination of a heroine, and the large full eye wandered slowly round the circle, lit with all the fire of intellect. Ennobled with all the beauty that makes the divinity of woman, and calm with a preternatural possession that awed even the terrific beings around her —with a fixed gaze she seemed to read her doom in their hellish countenances: there she saw no chance of hope—no promise of the slightest pardon, and, as if in confirmation of the sentence which she read, the rude arm of Malony, from which she had been momentarily released, was again extended to invade the sanctity of her person. Extending her left hand as if to claim a hearing for something she was about to say, she placed the right beneath the cloak that ill concealed the glowing beauties of her figure. A sudden sound was heard, like the clicking of a pistol-lock, and before any one could prevent the act, she drew forth a small weapon reserved for this dreadful exigency, and burying its dark muzzle in her beautiful and palpitating bosom, smiled with a look of ineffable contempt on the wretches round her, and drew the trigger.

# PAUL PERIWINKLE;

OR,

# The Pressgang.

## BOOK II.

## CHAPTER THE FIRST.

### THE FATE OF EVELEEN—THE IDENTITY OF THE ACTORS.

Who amongst our readers has ever indulged the fondest wishes, and found them most disappointed in the moment of their fruition? Who in the greatest hour of peril and danger has placed their whole reliance upon the friendship that renders back desertion in the place of confidence, and treachery where they have looked for truth? Who, when the greatest peril of their life was threatening, had counted securely on defying fate in a refuge that on trial only increased the danger of its occupant? If such there are who look upon these pages, these, and these only, can imagine the horror of the wretched and betrayed girl, when she felt the faithless flint snap on her bosom, and herself yet left to encounter all that life or imagination could present as most horrible. For a brief, a fleeting moment of hope, she still trusted the weapon had only hung fire, and would yet send to her heart that fearful but welcome ambassador of peace, which was the only human chance of safety left for her in this world. But no! that hope was denied her, that chance was gone; and while she still clasped the faithless iron to her bosom, the grinning fiends around sprung on her, their wounded, faint, bleeding, yet beautiful prey; and as she felt their unhallowed clasp, where none but the sacred arms of a father or a brother had ever pressed before, she felt that all was over, and imploring Heaven for rescue, sank, swooning and lifeless, in their clutches. Too soon was she recalled to life again; but over the horrible events that followed, humanity, propriety, and feeling, compel us to draw the veil. All that could most disgrace manhood or outrage loveliness, these hell-hounds in the shape of God's image are said to have perpetrated,—no solitary instance in a land where the misgovernment of the rulers and the ignorant barbarity of the ruled seem for centuries to have been striving which can most blacken and disgrace the pages of our history.

While the frightful scene we have been describing proceeded in one part of this devoted mansion, one scarcely more principled, though less revolting in its violence, was perpetrated on the floor above. Smith of the Shade (for he of the shade and the lantern were one and the same party) seemed to be of that prudent class who think it of little avail to pay a man for fighting, and then perform any part of the business themselves. During the whole of the night's melée, therefore, he, with a remarkable exercise of worldly prudence, had kept as much as possible in the back-ground. Not that our readers are to understand from this that he allowed his party to want any of that aid or encouragement which his lungs could afford: on the contrary, in this respect he even outshone Agamemnon in the Iliad, who is represented, with all the brightest qualities of a general, as passing from post to post, reproving, comforting, and animating by turns. This also did Smith of the Shade, but with a degree of statesmanlike sagacity that found his purpose better answered from the rear. No one could be more forward than he was in crying, "Now's your time, my boys—forward—on—cut 'em down—trample over them—fire away," and so forth; but then his remarkable modesty never allowed him to take any of these humane operations out of the hands of those men for whose valour and honour he appeared so much concerned: on the contrary, he seemed rather to prefer the situation of that worthy officer, the mate of the main-deck, in Her Majesty's navy, whose duty it is to stand at the soup-tub and see that every individual mess gets its proper proportion of meat. Indeed, so strongly did he illustrate this duty, that, for anything we should care to assert to the contrary, his notions might have been formed in that school for impartial justice. This, as a faithful historian, we know at least,—during that night of bloodshed he took upon himself all the responsibility of the rear-guard, allowing no one to be behind but himself, and sharply pricking in the quarter with the point of his sword all who were inclined to dispute that honour with him. When, therefore, he saw the staircase safely carried, its defenders slaughtered, and the fight driving chiefly towards the door of Eveleen's chamber, he seemed instinctively to avoid the indelicacy of pressing himself into that young lady's sanctuary, and bursting open in succession the other doors around, ascertained from the terrified servants, who were huddled together in one room, whither Nora Creina had been carried.

Without paying the slightest attention to any other point, he rushed up stairs, and found her whom he sought extended senseless and helpless on a sofa, while weeping over her was the lady to whose care she had been confided, and who had brought her, full of hope and health, a few hours before, to that ill-fated resting-spot. With little or no difficulty he succeeded in taking up Nora and her child, and bearing them to the door: her friend here threw herself before him, clasped his knees, and implored him not to tear her from one so dear, begging at the same time to know what she had done and whither she was to be carried.

At first Smith was resolute in his intention of bearing her off; but as

he looked at the kneeling woman, some other intention seemed to cross his mind. After a moment's consideration, he demanded if she were really the friend of Nora; and being assured that she was, he, in a voice of pretended confidence and compassion, assured her that his intentions were to save our heroine from the violence of his companions, and that if she wished Nora's happiness, she would lend her best efforts to forward her escape, and in that case might accompany them.

Catching at the slightest straw that floated on the universal deluge of their happiness, she eagerly and thankfully accepted the treacherous offer, and assisted him down stairs with his unresisting burden. On the first floor it required every effort to escape being wounded; but beckoning one of the sailors to help him down stairs with Nora, Smith no sooner, with this man's assistance, arrived safely below, than he sent up a message to the captain, to say that he had secured his prey, and all that remained for the latter was to make the best of his way and follow him. With the utmost rapidity in his power he now descended to the beach, and, assisted by the boat-keeper, placed in the stern-sheets the fainting form of Nora, still grasping in her senseless arms the little form for which alone she struggled through the frightful strife of her existence.

The poor deceived woman who accompanied her now sat down by her side, thankful that she had found a friend to assist in her extremity, and, though not without some misgivings as to his ultimate intentions, happy at least in this—that she had escaped the horrors of the frightful scene they had left behind. Smith now turned his impatient gaze towards that spot upon the height where a growing blaze of light proclaimed the work of vengeance to be still proceeding. He had not long to wait: before many minutes had elapsed, voices of men descending the cliffs were heard, and in the increasing light of day the eager eye of the expectant watcher detected the bulky form of the captain limping along with two of his crew, endeavouring, in the best manner they could, to bear off a couple of their wounded companions. This poor fragment was all that remained of the party of thirteen who, scarcely an hour since, had left their schooner confident in the perpetration of outrage, and little expecting the retribution that was at hand to meet them. The rest were either lying dead on the ensanguined floors of that once beautiful and quiet spot which their atrocity had profaned, or so desperately wounded as to be sure of soon meeting the reward they richly deserved.

"Well, here's a pretty nice bargain!" growled the rough and groaning captain, as he scrambled aft into the stern-sheets to take the helm; "another such a night as this, and the schooner will be altogether unmanned. Who, I should like to know, is going to pay for this?"

"I am, you avaricious devil!" replied Smith; "I'll pay you for it, and well, if you'll only give me time."

"Ay, time; why, there you have it. Time is everything with me; and while your time is coming, as you call it, a man may bleed to death. I've left about a gallon of my blood on the floors of that cursed vicarage. Talk of parsons not fighting, why, hang me if ever I had

a harder day's bout of it in my life! even the peck of one of their chickens is equal to the claw of our sea-eagles. There was that devil of a girl—she fought like a she tiger, though she's paid for it, poor soul, right heavily: did you see how she fought?"

"Why, no—yes—not exactly; that is—I had my own matter to look to, you know, and was obliged to attend to that."

"Ay, ay; I see you've been having a pretty easy time of it. How many wounds have you got?"

"Why, none about my head—you needn't look there—but a very severe one in my foot."

"Ay, ay; I see you know how to take care of yourself, no fear of that. But just look here;" and the huge ruffian turned round to the light, that streamed from the east, first one ghastly cheek and then the other.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Smith, "what a frightful wound! Where—how did you get that?"

"Why, from that young she-parson's musket. Lord, how she fought! Curse me if I an't fool enough to pity her, after all,—she had such a ——s fine spirit! and, lord, what eyes! Well, I think I never did see so fine a woman in all my life! I'd a good mind to bring her off harmless, after all her scratching; and if this wound hadn't been quite so painful, and put me in such an infernal fury, I would have done it."

"Don't fret yourself on that score, my boy," rejoined the other; "those mad Irishmen would never have stood it. Do you think any money bribed them to help us in to-night's business? Not at all. To them 'twas the mere payment of a long debt of revenge to her and her father; and before we even started, I knew what share in the matter was intended for both of them."

"And had you ever set eyes on the girl before?"

"Tut! yes, often—knew her well."

"Then maybe you had a spite against the little craft for some slight or other in courting her, or that like."

"Devil a bit."

"Then, d— me if you ain't a bigger villain than even I took you for!—you are, by ——! It's well for you all, and ill for her, poor bird, that I'd never chanced to see her before, or knew what you'd planned, or may I sink to the guns of the first privateer if either you or any one of them should ever have laid a finger on her in violence."

"Stuff! You great lubberly sea-cow, hold your rubbish! To think of your turning spooney sentimental on a bit of vixen's flesh, that you might pick up any day!"

"Lubber yourself, and see how you like it. What I say, I say; and my arm's strong enough to make it good any day: so you'd better keep your further slack to yourself, or we shall come to bloody cuffs yet! and you want your share of them to-night, too, for you've taken devilish good care to keep out of their way yet."

"Come, come, it's no use you and I quarrelling—these women have ears," muttered the other, in the same low voice in which their alter-

cation had been carried on hitherto; and in a few minutes, after a sullen silence on the part of the captain, the boat, rowed by only three men, approached the schooner.

Here, then, began in all its fullest difficulty another task which the captain's roguery had imposed upon him; namely, to get Nora and her captor on board the schooner undetected by Limpit, who too well knew the persons of both; how also to contrive that Smith of the Shade should be got below to his cabin without recognising the person of young Limpit, against whom he entertained the most deadly hatred, and whom he now believed to have been for ever removed from troubling him in his path of villany, rejoicing in the belief while he entertained it. The undertaking in so small a vessel as the schooner was indeed difficult; but, long inured to roguery and intrigue of every description, he fearlessly threw himself upon the endless resources of his own honesty and feared not to succeed.

And here, perhaps, the reader may feel inclined to inquire who were these several personages who seemed so unintentionally to be playing the game of hide-and-seek. It may not be an unreasonable query, and can at once be satisfied. To begin, then, with Smith of the Shade. Under the disguise of this honourable appellation the cowardly atrocity of Envee found shelter. And the captain?—was no other than Jack Alibi; while in the name of Limpit?—the reader may recognise, if he has not before suspected, the person of PAUL PERIWINKLE.

"Did not you tell me, skipper," whispered Envee as they approached the schooner, "that one of your men on board had once served under me?"

"Yes, to be sure I did; so you'd better conceal your handsome phiz in the collar of your cloak till I've sent him forward, unless you wish it to get wind how you spent the leave of absence to see your dying father."

"Ay, truly, that "dying father" was a fine thought of yours; but it was a hard matter to carry the day, even then.—So—now can you see enough of my face to swear by?"

"Why, not exactly; pull the right-hand flap up a little higher over your nose, for never was another made like it. So—that's the mark; now then to take in an old acquaintance. Schooner ahoy! Mr. Limpit!"

"Holloa" was the reply of Paul, coming aft to the taffrail.

"Run forward in the bows, please Mr. Limpit, as hard as you can tear," continued Alibi, "and get all hands on deck to heave up the anchor while I get my passengers here on board; and bear a hand, sir, as fast as you can: there's been an unlucky row ashore, and if the schooner is not out of the bay in twenty minutes we shall every one of us be made prisoners.."

As the crafty Alibi gave this intelligence, than which he well knew none on earth could be more startling and dreadful for the person to whom it was addressed,—unless, indeed, it had been the whole truth of that night's violence,—he stood up in the stern-sheets so as completely to shroud with his bulky person all sight of the passengers behind him from Paul, and all view of Paul from the passengers. On the other hand, this intelligence had no sooner reached the ears of our hero, than

a thousand horrors instantly flashed before his eyes, and without suspecting for a second that it was the truth, or indeed that Alibi had the least motive for so deceiving him, he returned a hasty "Aye, aye!" and darting down below, commenced turning out the hands to obey the order he had received.

No sooner was his back turned than Alibi leapt on board his craft, and seeing that Paul had quitted the deck, made an impatient motion of his hand to Envee, which the latter as rapidly interpreting, mounted the side and gained his cabin long before the slightest chance of his detection was afforded to one so interested in aiming at it.

With equal expedition the senseless form of Nora and her scarcely more discriminating friend were handed up by the sturdy seamen and conveyed to their berths below, unseen—nay, even unthought of by our hero, who, deluded by the false information of Alibi, was employing every energy in carrying off to a fate most terrible those very beings whom he would have died to rescue, had he only suspected how and where they were situated. But it seemed fated to be otherwise. Several minutes elapsed before Paul could get the men from their hammocks; and as soon as this was accomplished, he rushed on deck, and in a few minutes the anchor was weighed and the sails of the schooner given to the wind, Paul little dreaming who she carried with her, or who had embarked in the mean time.

When Alibi once saw safely below those against whose recognition he was so desirous to provide, a grin of successful villany stole over his frightful countenance, while he walked forward to assist one whom he had thus doubly trepanned. So far then all was safe, and it now only remained to use the same concealment till he had landed his passengers, and all would in his estimation be "right:" whether his execrable roguery was, however, to be so prospered, we have now to see.

## CHAPTER THE SECOND.

WHICH—BECAUSE THERE ARE NOT SUFFICIENT CHARACTERS IN OUR HISTORY ALREADY—INTRODUCES A NEW ONE.

"THERE is no hope left for us but in escape," said Nora, as, in an under-voice whose tones were carefully guarded, she addressed her female companion Miss Roebuck. The melancholy friends were sitting over the embers of a wood fire that had nearly decayed, and which, gathered in a hearth of very primitive construction, shot an occasional vivid ray around the gloomy and antique chamber as the wintry gust eddied down the large fireplace. A deep heavy murmur of the sea roared continuously in the hollow echoes of the vast chimney, and the thundering of the waves on the rocks below, seemed to shake even the venerable foundations of the solid building which contained them.

"God send we may effect it!" replied her fellow-sufferer in misery: "there is much need of escape, Heaven knows; the very aspect of this place is enough to break one's heart."

"It is indeed," replied Nora, wringing her hands, while the tears stole over her face afresh: "and when I think of what may have happened at home during our prolonged absence, and how that absence may have been interpreted, I scarcely can retain my senses. If it were not for this little being sleeping quietly here," bending down to kiss the infant fingers of her child, that smiled in its innocent sleep beside her. "I really think I must either have gone into confirmed frenzy, or terminated my miserable existence by some act of violence."

"Nay,—hush!—for shame! severe as your trials have been, think of the fate that we left hanging over that poor girl Evelyn."

"For pity's sake, don't mention it; my blood seems to stagnate, and my flesh to creep, when I recall that scene: my eyes are still blinded with the flashes and my senses confused with the noise of the firing, when I recall that night; and in my sleep, her exquisitely beautiful face appears before me, her soft voice lingers in my ears, and all the horrid threats poured out upon her head come back as terrifying as ever. No, when I reflect on her story, I feel that there is much for which we ought yet to be thankful—poor girl, how many tears I have shed at the remembrance of her fate!"

"Nothing could have been more awful than that night: but long before this, her sorrows have been ended; for as our vessel sailed out of the bay, I distinctly saw the whole of the Rectory in flames. Yet it is useless to dwell on these horrors; what we have seen of the past, should only make us more desperately determined to escape. What can be the motive of this wretch who detains us, he alone knows,—unless it is that unlucky face of yours, Nora."

"Unlucky, indeed! Unwomanly as the thought may be, I could

almost wish that it had worn the most revolting aspect possible, rather than it should have caused me the misery I have endured for the last twelvemonth."

"Well, well, my dear, tears are of no use; and though, as you say, they may spoil your beauty, they are as little likely to melt these stones, as they are the heart of the gaoler who keeps us here: though, I must say, if perseverance were to give any claim to a woman's consideration, he has done all he can to win yours."

"I wish that were all we have to apprehend; but from strictly scrutinizing this Smith's conduct, inexplicable as it may appear, I am inclined to think that he has some far stronger motive for detaining us than any mere matter of ordinary affection."

"There I think you are wrong. It may seem a most extraordinary mode of winning a woman's love, to coop her up like a common house-breaker, and never visit her except with a mask on, as if he hoped her heart was to be gained by manners not quite so soft as a polar-bear's, and a voice not quite so sound as a penny-trumpet's, with a figure that certainly must yield in grace to a hippopotamus;—this, I admit, may seem rather questionable in a matter of the affections, but still, that it is an affair of love, such as it is, I have no doubt, and I will tell you why. I discovered, while we were on board that ship, traces of great jealousy lest you should be seen by some man who was on board; so out of mere form I contrived to get a sight of this said personage, and, strange as it might seem in such a place, he really did look like a gentleman."

"Was that actually so? that's very curious."

"It is indeed."

"Can you describe his appearance?"

"He was very good-looking."

"How old was he?"

"He might be from about two to four and twenty."

"Was he tall?"

"No; he was rather short than tall: but I observe that the generality of sailors are short—yet, somehow or other, he had very little the look of a sailor about him."

"Was he fair or dark?"

"Dark! and this you'll say is fancy, but I could not help imagining there was a look about his face that reminded me of yourself: it had the same melancholy expression which unfortunately I have so often seen you wear."

"Ah! that must indeed have been fancy, though I wish you had mentioned this to me at the time: had I only known there was one creature on board who was likely to befriend us—"

"What would have been the use of it? I only saw him the day before we left the ship. I watched for some opportunity to speak to him, but he never came down into that part of the vessel where we were; and I had merely an opportunity of observing him as he walked up and down the deck above us."

"Then no wonder I never saw him; for, persecuted as I was with the

odious wretch who keeps us here, and tormented by sea-sickness, I dreaded nothing so much as leaving my bed."

"Yes, I observed that; and I was afraid that if we appealed to the young stranger, we might only get him into trouble without helping ourselves, more especially as they promised to set us ashore the next morning; and then I felt convinced we must have some opportunity of making our escape."

"Too true! and now when we are on the eve of attempting it, how frightful an undertaking does it seem!—two unprotected women to evade the grasp of a ruffian like this; and as if that were not sufficiently hopeless, encumbered in their flight by a young child, whose cries, dear little infant! may bring ruin on the mother at whose breast it clings."

"Well, well, Nora! don't unnerve yourself by giving way to these fits of weeping. It is true, we are but women; but what may not—indeed, what have not women achieved, when those they love are in danger? Your child? what cannot a mother dare when she thinks of it?"

"Most true, and it is that thought shall support me in my undertaking; that alone has supported me through all my past sorrows, and the little sufferer seems to become dearer for every struggle we go through together. Now then, what are the plans on which we must depend?"

"These:—I have bribed over one of the men above, and he has promised to assist us to-night in effecting our escape."

"But how can we hope to manage it, when the window is so high from the ground, that no one could attempt the descent with any hopes of life, and the only other passage is through the sitting-room of our gaoler?"

"These are only the difficulties of our position; if we have any hopes of escape, we must rivet our attention on its feasibilities alone; our deliverer that is to be, insists that our greatest chance of success lies in summoning courage to descend by the window to the rocks."

"I never can attempt it: if death is to be my portion in this miserable spot, it must be endured as I best can meet it; but no inducement ever could tempt me to descend that frightful abyss."

"As to death, do not flatter yourself with the delusion of any such easy exit from your sorrows; but when the patience of your gaoler is exhausted, reflect how dreadful may be your position."

"No, you mistake; the refuge I mentioned, I have secured beforehand; and when no other hope is left, I have at least this," taking from her bosom that which had once been a scent-bottle, but was now filled with a strong preparation of opium.

"Trust not to that; it is a medicine which very often frustrates the object of its employer as far as death is concerned: and were it not so, the act that freed you from your miseries would redouble those of your child."

"Alas! that is too true; there is nothing but despair on every side."

"Say, rather, there is no room for despair on any side. What! have you not as much courage as myself? Escape, you admit, is the only chance for any of us; and we are bound to attempt it, even if we perish

in the effort. Consider, my dear Nora, what it is that you now fear; it can be but the extreme of danger; that at the worst is only bodily destruction; and is it not better to be dashed to pieces to-night upon the rocks below, than linger on in a terrible captivity, and, at last, perhaps be compelled to save feelings which are dearer than any in existence by the questionable act of suicide?"

"You have convinced me; I dare not believe, I dare not trust myself to hope that we can be successful; but if we are to perish, let it be together. Now, come and examine the frightful exit that alone is open to us."

"Frightful? to me it appears the most pleasant prospect I have seen for many a weary day; look out—but it is no easy matter to open even the lattice."

"So confident has our gaoler been that no escape here is practicable, he has neglected the precaution even of a bar. What an awful depth it seems! how many hundred feet do you think it is?"

"Come, come, Nora, you cannot measure its feet and depth by hundreds! How singularly grand the view is!"

"Say, rather, how singularly horrible. When I think of having to descend it with my child, it seems almost preferable that we should both sup on the laudanum together."

"And where would be the remembrance of its father, Nora?" softly whispered her friend.

"In heaven, where I should hope to meet him."

"No, no; you will think better of the effort when the hour arrives to put it into execution. Look out upon the sea battling against all obstacles, and the night-breeze will revive your courage."

For some minutes the friends stood gazing in silence on the solemn and exciting scene below. The place where they were imprisoned was an old stronghold, on a lofty rock that jutted over the sea in one of the loneliest parts of the Isle of Man; the window of their prison commanded nothing but the eternal view—"*pontus et aer.*" It is true that by an effort the spectator could look down on the iron-bound coast on which the waves beat below; but unless the head was protruded from the casement, the sea and sky were alone visible. Often, during their captivity, had our friends watched the numerous light sails passing over the blue mirror of the distant sea, and wished with impotent anxiety for some extraordinary power of communication with these traversers of the deep, confident how many must have turned their sea-glasses upon their very prison walls, who not only possessed the will but the power to rescue them: yet, there, alas! they pined; impotent, unassisted, unavenged, with the very means of succour and safety passing, like the visions of Tantalus, before their eyes.

Now, however, the scene presented a far different aspect. The hour was drawing near midnight; the heavens were of a dark deep blue. Night unrolled her starry robe in all the purple and silver glory of the firmament; while, from the north-west, broad belts of pale but brilliant gold shot over the ethereal dome of heaven, the trembling but dazzling splendours of the Aurora-Borealis. The wind blew strongly

from the same quarter, and as it swept along the sea, ploughed up the haughty crests of each successive wave, in long ridges of foam, whose sparkles reflecting back the coruscations overhead, glanced forth, amid the comparative shadow of the ocean, like furrows of living fire. Heavily as each surge struck on the rocks beneath, did the hollow booming sound fall on the ears of the listener; while the shrill and melancholy cry of some stray plover on the wing for food, and the tramp of the seaman watching overhead, were the only signs of life that interrupted the moaning of the night-breeze among the ruined copings of the time-worn building.

At some short distance on the right was the little fishing-village of * * *; and as the clock of its simple church struck twelve, the sounds were borne to leeward by the wind.

"Hark!" said Miss Roebuck, counting the hour; "yes, that is midnight; it is now the time when my strange knight-errant begins his watch, and thus gains the opportunity to assist us in our escape: if we remain silent for a few minutes longer, we shall hear him relieve the watch they keep above."

"Are you sure you can trust him? May he not be a spy and traitor on us? You have forgotten to tell me how you brought him over to our interest, or who and what he is." Her companion here laid her finger on her lip in token of silence; a precaution the prudence of which was speedily made manifest by the sound of voices overhead. In a few minutes, these died away, and the former heavy footsteps were heard retreating, and those of a lighter and a quicker pace became distinguishable in their stead. The new-comer was evidently a younger and more jovial man—the friends below heard him commence his watch by a brisk running to and fro on his short beat, accompanied by a noise which they rightly imagined to result from that beating of the arms over the chest by which hackney-coachmen, *et id genus omne*, including equally landsmen, sailors, and marines, are accustomed to impart warmth to their exposed bodies. As soon as the running and the beating had ceased, a singularly jovial and nonchalantic voice, albeit a little cracked in the tenor, struck up with the following elegant chant:—

My name it is Jack Spratt,
  Bless your eyes, bless your eyes,
My name it is Jack Spratt,
    Bless your eyes.

I am neither lean nor fat,
  I have nine lives like a cat,
And for no man care I that,
    Bless your eyes.

"Confess, now, Nora," said Miss Roebuck, when the singer had concluded his ditty, "it is some pleasure to hear even such a song as that, in this dismal place of wretchedness."

"Indeed it is; it almost seems as if we were getting back to life once more."

"I am glad you think so; let us hail it as a good omen of success, and as I am sure you must be curious to know what sort of a being can be cheerful in such a den as this, draw back—let me close the casement—put another log on the fire, and while we wait for the moment of our effort, I'll endeavour to give you some idea of our modern Don Quixote, the redresser of damsels and the righter of wrong. He is a thin, sprightly, saucy-looking imp, with red hair, and the drollest face imaginable—being the personification of impudence, shrewdness and good-nature, in solemn league and covenant. Once or twice, on those rare occasions on which I have availed myself of our tyrant's offer to get a mouthful of fresh air, his appearance and remarks to his brother seamen attracted my attention; and having addressed him on some pretence or other, I found that he alone seemed to care too little for the authority of his brutal commander to persevere in a system of silence in which nearly all the other men persisted. Thus a little kind of intimacy sprung up, and I found my red-haired knight generally on the platform about the hour at which I made my appearance. Always on the look-out for some opportunity to escape, I did not mention to you the hopes I now formed, for fear of rendering your trials unnecessarily bitter by disappointment; and while I was deeply anxious to devise some method of opening the subject to my novel hero, he one day offered a spyglass to look at some porpoises rolling in the distance, and while adjusting it to my eye, whispered these words.

"'Excuse my boldness, ma'am, but are you ladies below prisoners here against your will, or only on a visit?'

"'Prisoners!' quickly whispered I; 'and could we only find a friend to aid us in our escape, he might name his own reward.'

"'Then we'll talk of that to-morrow, ma'am.' One of the gruff seamen, who had observed our conversation, here came up, and ordering our friend very unceremoniously off, thus put an end to the conversation. For many days no opportunity occurred of renewing it: I saw that we were watched, and became therefore doubly cautious. At last, one cold rainy morning, when you remember wondering at my predilection in venturing out, I found my friend alone waiting to be relieved from his watch, while the others were at breakfast. In a few words he cautioned me to say nothing more to him for a week, and then if an escape were practicable he would inform me of the fact by wearing a red woollen comforter round his neck; while, on the contrary, if that very comfortable sign were not displayed, we must be content to endure our woes till a more favourable moment. He asked if I would trust him: I, of course replied, 'Implicitly.' He then said that our only hope would be to descend from the window, the means of doing which he would be sure to provide. The day which he named has arrived. I saw him this morning in his promised sign of hope, the red comforter, which was almost as red as his hair; and though he looked anything but comfortable himself, the very thought of getting away from this odious place rendered him a perfect Amadis de Gaul in my eyes. At two o'clock he is to let himself down from above by a rope to our window, which is to be open to receive him; and he is then to lower us successively to the bottom.

In his dialect our new friend is as complete a cockney as if just imported from the streets of London—where it seems he was apprenticed; and occasionally he murders the vowel and the silent *h* in a way that makes one shudder. And now, having told you these particulars, in what romantic name do you think our friend delights to rejoice?"

"Heaven knows."

"Nothing less than 'Jack Spratt,'—nay, never laugh at it—it's as good a one for our purpose, and better too perhaps, than if it were Montmorenci."

"Nay, I'm sure I shall never laugh at him for his name; though there is something, too, inexpressibly ridiculous in two forlorn damsels being thus spirited away out of their three-pair-of-stairs window by Jack Spratt, with red hair, and a professed cockney."

"As it is not often that you get a laugh, I suppose I must permit this merriment at the expense of my cavalier: and that now being fairly terminated, I beg to suggest the propriety of getting ready whatever little necessaries may be wanting or capable of being carried in our flight. We must still leave many valuable and heavy things behind us."

"But the heaviest, alas! we must take with us, despite of ourselves."

"What is that, Nora?"

"A heavy heart."

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## CHAPTER THE THIRD.

CONTAINS THE SORROWS OF BAMBOOZLE—THE TRIUMPHS OF ENVEE—AND THE PLEASURES OF PAUL.

While our fair friends are preparing themselves for the momentous undertaking on which they were thus obliged to rush, and finally commending themselves to that care which is the last and best hope of the unfortunate, it may not be unacceptable to our reader if we turn for a few moments to see what has become of some other personages in our history.

As in all veritable memoirs of this description the chief respect should be had to equal justice, so our duties compel us to return to the case of Doctor Bamboozle. Our readers will remember that we left that light of science, like "the light of other days," considerably enumbrated by the shadow of a coming storm, which darkened the horizon to windward while he sat shivering in the stern-sheets of that boat which had conveyed him so forcibly from the land, without a single protection but his *umbrella*, which had been slung out of sight under his coat at the time of his capture. Long and wistfully, beneath this beloved expanse, did he regard the beach now lined with the yeomanry, and the mob who stood impotently gazing. With the doubt of a landsman, he felt convinced that they ought to rescue him, but did not exactly know how. In a few minutes

even this faint hope vanished. The image of his distress—patients—the visage of his bereaved housekeeper, and the recollection of all his other household gods, came to afflict him, and he internally damned Sir Job Periwinkle for seducing him into a scrape from which all the Lord Mayors in Europe, as it appeared to him, were utterly insufficient to extricate him. He now thought fit to implore the mercy of his captor, Jack Alibi; but as mercy was a thing of which Jack Alibi had never been possessed, it was somewhat hard to demand his exhibition of it, and his cries were unheeded. The worthy physician next turned his attention to the man-of-war in chase, and for some time imagined that all his difficulties would be terminated by her approach. When the gale, however, grew to a height that threatened the safety both of the pursuers and pursued, Alibi, who would have beheld the Doctor and all his kin drowned twice over without the least sort of compunction, had nevertheless a most tender eye for his boat, and seeing that she must speedily be swamped in her present situation, had her hauled alongside to leeward, and, in spite of the great difficulty of the undertaking while the sloop was under weigh, hoisted on board, and regularly stowed. Bamboozle, half dead with fright and sea-sickness, was now lifted out and taken below. On his passage to the berth he came in contact with our hero, and thrusting out his hand towards Paul, exclaimed—"Ah! my dear boy, allow me to congratulate you on your escape;" but Paul, remembering the conspicuous share Bamboozle had taken in the same, withdrew from such very questionable felicitations, and turning his back on the offender, renounced thenceforward all further communication with the faithless Doctor. In this state affairs continued until the time of the outrage recited in our last chapter, when Nora and her companion having been carried to their berths, Bamboozle was summoned to attend upon them.

Previously to this step being taken, a consultation had been held between Jack Alibi and Envee.

The latter had expressed at once his great fear of the Doctor's trustworthiness, and still greater apprehension that unless some medical assistance were afforded Nora after the horrors of that night, a serious illness might follow. But then Envee, who well knew Bamboozle's character, was too much afraid of the latter's committing him to trust freely to his professional secrecy. On the other hand, Jack Alibi had still greater cause for the same distrust, well knowing that Paul Periwinkle was so close at hand to be the ready recipient of Bamboozle's betrayal.

It is true that Paul had indignantly continued to reject every advance to reconciliation made by Bamboozle; yet this was but a poor guarantee to the conspirators that the same estrangement would continue between them. After long deliberation they agreed to administer a fearful oath to the Doctor, which they did to this effect,—that no inducement should ever lead him to reveal the fact of Nora Creina being his patient, or any circumstance connected with her appearance on board.

But, unfortunately, Bamboozle was one of those men who, however excellent at taking an oath, are very inferior in keeping it. Having

prescribed for Nora a few things requisite for her revival, he on the following day entertained deep cogitations within himself as to how far he was bound to keep the secrets of Alibi, or whether he should not rather reveal them to Paul. In this debate we must do him the justice to say, some feelings of remorse were mingled. He had enjoyed time to reflect on the part taken in Paul's execution, and at length truly ashamed of it, screwed himself to the determination of making what reparation lay in his power; as for his oath, he argued with himself that it was compulsory and of no effect. Three several times did he steal up to the side of our indignant hero on the quarter-deck, and was as often repulsed; at length, having assured Paul that he possessed some very important secret most essential to his happiness, which he only wanted a moment's audience to unfold, he received the gratifying information that he was an unmitigated scoundrel, whose word was not to be believed on his oath, and who was perfectly welcome to go to the devil.

It may naturally be inferred that this was not the most pleasing information which a man of the doctor's science could receive, and getting equally passionate and unreasonable on his side, he resolved to hold his tongue and let affairs take their own course. In this position they continued when the sloop ran into —— Bay, in the Isle of Man.

Up to this period, Jack Alibi had contrived that Envee should only make his appearance on deck at those moments when Paul Periwinkle was below. The course of the vessel had been so delayed, that she did not come to her moorings till nearly two o'clock in the morning, and Paul, whose watch was then over, being fast asleep in his hammock, Nora and her attendant were made to get into a boat alongside, and quietly rowed to the land, while their relative lay securely wrapt in slumber, of course wholly ignorant of what passed so near.

Having rowed to shore their unhappy passengers, under charge of Envee, the boat returned to the sloop, was immediately hoisted on board, and the little craft weighing anchor made sail for the West Indies.

The time which had been passed on board by Nora had in the mean while been devoted to pondering on the circumstances of her detention, and the being who had been the chief agent in it. Day by day her remorseless captor had with all the affectation of respect solicited permission to visit her in the saloon, which was set aside for her use, but, fearful of yet submitting his pretensions to a personal recognition, had never ventured to appear in her presence without a mask.

To all his studied advances, the most cutting indifference was returned, and while he imagined that his victim was deliberating on the answer to be returned to his hateful solicitations, she was in reality endeavouring to recollect where and under what circumstances she had first heard the voice that now addressed her in disguised accents.

Day by day the fictitious sound haunted her without intermission, at last the idea presented itself of its real owner, and every observation she made tended so strongly to confirm the truth, that by the time she reached the shore she had no longer any doubt of its identity. With

a woman's quickness and sagacity she now debated whether she should allow her conviction to appear to the party most interested in it, and after considerable doubt prudently resolved to follow his example and trust to its concealment. At the earliest moment, however, she availed herself of his protestation of affection and admiration to mention the circumstances under which she had been hastening from Ireland, and implore him, by the regard he professed, to expedite her arrival at Berrylea. With a cruelty that accorded ill with his professions, he now declared that her journey was altogether too late, as he had not only been one of the spectators who had seen her cousin executed, but cut down and conveyed to the house of the surgeon, to whose hands the last horrible portion of the murderer's sentence had been committed: that this had been duly performed he pledged his own most solemn assertion, and further that Paul Periwinkle's remains had been given up to his relatives for those melancholy rites with which affection loves to mark its regard for the dead. The effect of this intelligence was so violent as almost to produce a relapse of that disease from which the care of her friends had so recently rescued her. The quiet with which she was at present secluded tended in a great degree however to abate the violence otherwise produced, seconded most powerfully by the admirable suggestions of her attendant, who urged the great inducements which their informer had for forging the whole story. By this time, their inquiries had put them in possession of the place where they were confined, spite of all the care used to conceal it from their discovery, and fertile in expedients and strong in hope as their sex has ever been, an escape was immediately planned.

Against flight every precaution had been taken but the right one. Every sort of spy had been placed around his victims by Envee; but fortunately he had forgotten to take from them the power of corrupting all;—the natural consequences followed.

As soon as Nora reached the shore, all her fears as to the identity of her captor were confirmed. Further disguise Envee knew to be useless, and unheard-of and audacious as was his detention, he had the madness and folly to attempt it. In furtherance of his plans he had exchanged his station at Berrylea for the one he at present held, and thus took advantage of the power confided to him, to prosecute designs not only the most nefarious, but the most certain of detection and punishment. For escape from the obvious punishment of such a crime, he trusted to that "Devil's Luck," which, for a while, seems to hedge in the guilty, as well as to that confusion and want of minute control, which is the curse of all large forces in an extensive war. The only just explanation of conduct seemingly so blind being that of the Latin Quem Deus.

## CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

### THE ESCAPE.

"Are you all ready at last, Nora?" demanded Miss Roebuck.

"As much so as I shall ever be," was the reply of the trembling girl, as she pressed still closer to the cradle of her child, yet forbore to awake it till the last moment. Her companion was yet comforting and conjuring her to keep up her courage, when the sound of the village clock striking two, was distinctly borne upon the breeze.

"There is the hour!" said her companion, and springing to the window, she undid the lattice. In a few minutes a gentle noise was heard as of some one grating against the wall above, a rope was quietly let down, and the figure of a man appeared endeavouring with his feet to find the window—to rush forward and place the shoe on the resting-place was the act of a second on the part of Miss Roebuck, and Jack Spratt then entered the room in propria persona. Nora, despite of her misery, intuitively looked up to see if she could recognise the description given by her friend, and there in truth she beheld the hair red as the dim light could possibly discover it, and the face saucy, imperturbable, and good-humoured, as Miss Roebuck described it to be—there was no mistaking him—this was Jack Spratt, beyond all doubt; and it was no slight relief in that dismal hour to see an effigies of such drollery and good-nature approaching her. The light figure advanced on tip-toe holding up a finger to imply caution, and speaking in a low tone said—"Good evening, ladies, I hope you're all ready. There's as little time to be lost now as at a wedding. Which of you will go first?"

"We leave that entirely to you," said Miss Roebuck.

"Then I say, Ma'am, the stoutest heart."

"Then that unfeminine charge I fear must fall on me," was her reply. Without a moment's hesitation she first turned to Nora, and pressing her in her arms gave her some cautions not to be hurried, and then turning away was about to leave the window. Suddenly, however, some thought appeared to strike her, and going back to her friend, she insisted on being allowed to take down the child first, as the best pledge that the mother must then follow.

"I cannot, I cannot spare my child," said the mother, standing between the window and the cradle—"do not take it from me, I have nothing left me but that; do not rob me of my boy—what is it that you fear?"

"Why, from your manner, that you half contemplate remaining behind and giving up everything as lost."

For a moment Nora looked confused and conscience-stricken.

"Well if I did, it was but a moment's weakness and it is past. Do not touch my child, and I will go down with you if you like."

"Excuse me, Ma'am," said Spratt, coming forward, "but I can't say

to my rope as Jack Ketch did to the man's heels, 'Don't be alarmed, they'll stand both of us.' One at a time, Ma'am, if you please, you'll last all the longer, whichever first you like, but make haste about it, but there's less time to lose than if we paid a guinea a minute for it, and by jingo, if I'm not mistaken, I hear some one up aloft now, and if so we're done clean as a smelt, my ladies, and no mistake."

"Oh Nora, how can you be so foolish and so undecided; let me have the child with me, I'll take every care of it—in your weak nervous state you would scarcely have strength enough to hold *yourself*—this indecision is really unkind, is really criminal."

"Then fly yourself, my dear friend, why should you stay to share my misfortunes? leave us to die together; any death is better than being dashed to pieces on those horrid rocks."

"I read this in your eye, I thought what was working in your heart, even while you would have persuaded me that you were about to follow Spratt." Turning to the seaman, "You'd better go back to your station before your loss is discovered; there'll be no escape from here to-night, nor indeed ever—here is the reward I promised you;" putting a packet of money in his hand. "Escape for myself alone is without value—fly—fly back to your post, before you are involved in our folly."

"Thank ye, Ma'am," said Jack, pocketing the packet with incredible celerity, "an invaluable salve for every wound on a long journey;" and while Nora was throwing herself on the breast of her reproachful friend imploring her forgiveness, Jack Spratt slipped behind the mother, took off his great rough sailor's cap, "jammed it over the face of the babby" as he afterwards phrased the transaction, tucked cradle and all under his ready arm, and before Nora could make a single effort to prevent the act, was out of the window in a twinkling with that young hope of the house of Periwinkle, over whose daintily laced cap, the lightest zephyr of the heavens had never been allowed to stray unwatched. Scarcely could it have been deemed practicable for the mother, engaged as she was, to detect this piece of friendly energy on the part of Jack Spratt; yet by some extraordinary combination of instinct and observation, she instantly saw what had taken place, and when too late to avert it, dashed forward with an effort at screaming that was only in time prevented by her friend's placing her hand across her mouth.

"Hold! hold! in mercy's sake be quiet, or every hope is lost," whispered Miss Roebuck. The request seemed instantly obeyed, but not in truth by any act of volition on the part of the mother, who was now found to have swooned in her friend's arms. While yet Miss Roebuck was wringing her hands over this additional catastrophe, which was indeed the luckiest thing which could have happened to her, that immortal hero Jack Spratt once more put in his appearance.

With the dexterity of a lamplighter he bounded into the room, saying, "Come, come, Miss, bear a hand, or we shall miss our ticket for soup. That respectable young gentleman the babby below, says he won't stand any more blessed nonsense, he is squealing out in the most outrageous way; and if they should catch a tone of his pipe, you'll be kind

enough to understand it's all Hookey Walker with Jack Spratt;"—and Jack made a sign on his neck, which may in brief be translated as the sign of the gibbet.

"What am I to do, Mr. Spratt, what am I to do? this lady has fainted."

"To be sure, Miss, and very haccommodating of her to do so; it was the werry favour I was going to hask of her, only I had a little delicacy about popping the question;—here—I'll get down first with her, and then come up for you, and if you hear the rope break on the road, just about half way down or so, why you won't expect me back again?" and with this unceremonious explanation, Jack seized Nora Creina round the waist—with great difficulty succeeded in getting through the casement, laid hold of the rope, and in an instant disappeared into the frightful void beneath.

With agonised expectancy Miss Roebuck watched the slight cord by which he hung; in the moment of her first agitation at seeing her friend and venturous knight thus dangerously exposed, she snatched a brand from the fire and held it out of the window with the anxious desire to facilitate the landing of her fellow fugitives below. She had utterly forgotten that in so doing she would give an opportunity of discovering their flight to those from whom they most wished to conceal it. Engaged as Jack was with one arm supporting Nora and the other holding on by the rope, he was unable to use any gesture that should convey to Miss Roebuck the danger to which she exposed them.

"My heyes," muttered Mr. Spratt, in a state of awful trepidation, "that gal will be the flooring of us after all, if she doesn't hold her weather eye up. Oh! if I only had St. Paul's visperin gallery here," and with his usual quickness, remembering the principle on which it acted, he arrested his downward progress with some difficulty, put his mouth close to the wall, and with his strongest whisper, conveyed the following polite insinuation—

"Douse that glim, my hearty, or you'll snip all our tapes."

A gust of strong wind rushing by prevented the arrival of all this elegance at its destination, but very kindly in its place puffed out the brand, and before Miss Roebuck could replace it, Jack Spratt had not only gained the bottom safely with his burden, but an event had occurred in the chamber above that occupied all the energies and attention of its tenant.

This was the violent thundering of some person outside the stout oak door of the ladies' sitting-room; the sound struck to the heart of its hearer, like the summons of grim Death itself. Every nerve shook and trembled, but she replied not a word. Again the heavy hand was applied, again the door shook on its staples, and the arched roof of stone resounded fearfully to the blows by which admittance was sought to be obtained; but Miss Roebuck, faithful to herself, would not allow a sound to escape; at last the odious voice of Smith was heard exclaiming, "Let me in I say, or I'll break open the door; do you hear there, let me in." Miss Roebuck now found she could be silent no longer, but with all a woman's tact, the device was ready at her need; stealing

into their inner-room on tiptoe, she made a pretence of jumping out of bed, and opening the chamber door; taking one or two timid steps across the sitting-room she demanded in the most timid tones of a female just roused from sleep—

"Who's there? What is the matter? Is the house on fire?"

"D———n, no Ma'am, the house *isn't* on fire, and you know it; let me in this instant."

"What, sir!" then hearing a noise behind her, she turned round and saw Jack Spratt just hoisting himself up to the window. Beckoning him to her assistance, and at the same time giving him a sign of caution, while he carefully stole in, she resumed her answer to the interrogator at the door. "What Sir! let a gentleman into ladies' private rooms at this time of night? I wonder you could expect such a thing! How could we ever recover it? What would your men say to it, sir?" Then silently beckoning to Jack Spratt to take up the two or three little bundles that lay around; but Jack when he first heard his commander's voice, seemed ready to sink into the ground—every particle of colour fled from his cheek, his arms dropped powerless by his side, and no one could possibly have believed that it was the same individual who but a few minutes since had been so daring and intrepid—not so Miss Roebuck—a woman's courage is always the courage of the mind—the highest description of valour of which the human soul is capable—danger strengthens instead of deterring it, and where many men grow nerveless, they simply become more cool. The valour of man is most dependent on brute force, and where this fails, courage in an uneducated mind rarely survives its loss.

On the moment that Miss Roebuck perceived the influence of old habits of discipline on the mind of her knight, she began to fear that all was lost, till looking round, she perceived on the supper table a decanter half full of wine. Swift as the thought struck her, she poured it into a large tumbler, and making Spratt swallow it while the continued thundering at the door showed the strength of the bolts that kept out the lieutenant, Jack began with much trepidation, and many looks at the portal, to sling round him the packages which his lady fair desired to carry with her in her flight.

"Will you let me in I say, or must I break open this door?" again demanded the lieutenant.

"What can you want inside here, sir? How can I let a man into a lady's room, I say, at this time of night? you know very well the thing's impossible: what is it you want, sir?"

"Want, ma'am, why I want to know what business that light can have showing from your window?"

"Light, sir! what, mustn't we have a light in the room? Do you want to murder us like the princes in the Tower, most crookbacked Gloster, that you won't even allow us fire or candle in this miserable prison?"

"I tell you it was no candle, ma'am—it was some strong glare—I saw it glance even on the rocks beneath my window."

"Oh! you silly gentleman, it was the aurora borealis, no doubt," beckoning to Jack Spratt to make haste.

"D—n your impudence, madam, and the aurora borealis too," replied Envee, trying to kick in the door, "I tell you you're trying to escape, and if Miss Nora doesn't come immediately here and answer to her name, to show she's in the room, I'll force this lock open without delay!"

"Why, dear me, sir, you surely have taken too much wine for supper! How do you think two poor silly women are to escape out of your break-neck window; do you think if that had been possible, we should have staid here so long for the sake of your exquisite beauty? This is a pretty way truly to win a young lady's affections! to wish her called up out of bed, and her poor dear little baby awoke, merely to convince a tipsy lieutenant that we're not all made like cats with nine lives a piece, and claws to go up and down precipices at pleasure! however, I'll go and tell her of it, and you must take the consequences. If you'll wait here, and I can persuade her to leave her bed and her child to come and talk to you in the cold, you shall have your own way."

Stealing once more on tip-toe from the door where she had been standing, Miss Roebuck took a quiet look round to see that she had left nothing behind her, stepped out of the window into the arms of her faithful knight Jack Spratt, and in another instant down they sank. Having landed safely on the rocks, Spratt's first care was to haul down the other end of the rope from above, where, just above the coping-stone, he had screwed in a small pulley, through which it ran with sufficient ease to answer all the purposes required, and rapidly coiling it up, and giving it to Miss Roebuck to hold, he lifted from the ground the form of Nora Creina, just then beginning to return to life; Miss Roebuck snatched up "the respectable young gentleman, the babby," and wrapping it in her shawl, tilted the empty cradle into the sea, and, without the utterance of a single word, the party pursued their route as rapidly as they could to a little sandy cove, between their late prison and the fishing village. Here was lying, in the care of two men, a small boat: into this our friends hastily jumped, the boatmen as rapidly pushed off their bark, and Jack Spratt taking a third oar, they rowed away as hard as they could for a fishing-smack lying ready to receive them.

The wind was however blowing far too strongly to enable them to make any sufficient sort of headway, and lights soon showing themselves at every point of the hold they had just quitted, convinced them that their flight was discovered. "Row for Heaven's sake! my dear Mr. Spratt, as fast as you can—see, they must have broken into our room and found we are not there."

"Ay, ma'am, there's no mistake about that, and thank God that we're not. I'd as leef exchange French cambric for Scotch calico, as give this crazy boat for the best berth in yonder tower; but we shall never get along with oars only; Ben, my boy, we must up-stick," addressing the elder seaman who accompanied them.

"Up-stick, Jack? we shall never be able to show a rag of canvas to this breeze."

"Breeze or no breeze, I tell you if you don't up-stick and show your yard of flax, we shall all be going round the fleet before we're a month

older, for a little bit of desertion; what can three oars do against this head-sea? Give them 'ere coves ashore ten minutes longer, and they'll be down upon us with their twelve-oared galley; up-stick I say, and never mind a breadth or two being blown out of the sail, remember we must get on board the fishing craft some minutes ahead, or I'm blowed if we shan't be measured over the counter, and no mistake about that."

"I hope, Mr. Spratt," cried Nora, once more reviving when she found her child in her arms with his head not smashed quite as flat as a pancake; "I hope, Mr. Spratt, you're not going to think of sailing in such a night as this."

"I hax your pardon, ma'am, most umbly, certainly not, if you wishes it hotherwise;" and the faithless Spratt, in the very act of giving this assurance, seized the mast, stuck it up in its place, loosed the sail, fixed the sprit in its eye, hoisted it up, set it in its becket, drew aft the sheet and took the tiller, before any one could utter another remonstrance. "There, my dear ladies, that's all. An ell of speech cut from the roll of the Recorder of London, ladies, when he passed sentence of 'anging on a gentleman of my hacquaintance.—Ben, my boy, put in that lee oar, you'll be catching a crab, and as veve had our supper that's hunnecessary.—Now, ladies, I calls this a werry pleasant hexcursion, and so no doubt the conwicts must think when they go to Botany Bay."

Unfortunately, however, for the mercurial Jack Spratt, two or three simultaneous whistles were heard in the air above them, a blaze of light flashed forth on the dark waters from the old fort astern, and the rattling of musketry pealed out upon the breeze.

"Holloa," said Jack, looking round, "those gentlemen to leeward have most hinevitably made a mistake—don't be alarmed, my dear young ladies—excuse my mentioning the fact—but they're firing much too high to hurt us: a matter that gave great consolation to the cock-sparrows when they hobserved Halderman Sharpsport knock a piece out of the new moon—Ben, my boy, yours is a werry old hat, just show your hat-tachment to me by dipping it overboard, and flinging some water into our sail; it'll hold a little more wind then—so—that's it—now she walks along—fire away, my bully boys—give Jack Spratt another couple of cables-lengths, and he doesn't care a yard of bombazin for the whole roost of ye—there you go—there's another squad at the trigger, and the balls come as quick as bobbins on a lace-pillar—Ben, my boy, take out your oar on the weather side,

For there's nothing in life cheers our hearts, boys,
Like smelling the powder and hearing the ball,
Nor sweeter the odour the grog-tub imparts, boys,
Nor merrier the whistle that pipes dinner-call.

While Jack Spratt was carolling gaily forth the above strains, the boat he steered, under a wet sail and a couple of weather oars, swept over the long seas with eagle speed: the musket-balls falling now to leeward—now to windward—now chipping off a piece of the boat's gunwale—now whizzing harmlessly high in the air—but as yet fortu-

nately wounding neither any material part of her simple rigging nor one of her helpless crew.

With an utter inexperience of all matters like the present, the ignorant fishermen to whom she belonged had never thought of muffling their rowlocks, and from the instant of their pushing off, the distinct sound of the pulling being plainly heard at the fort, they were on the look-out to fire on the boat as soon as they found themselves able to catch sight of her. From the checkered and indistinct light this would have been impossible, had our friends still continued rowing only, and thus had they made no noise, they might have stolen off to their humble bark undiscovered. On the moment, however, that they hoisted sail, the bleached and worn canvas glittered in the dying beams of the aurora, and pointed out the object the enemy were so desirous to ascertain.

As Jack had foretold, Envee, determined to lose no chance, not only opened his dastardly fire upon two defenceless women,—for he had nothing but conjecture to make him think that Spratt had deserted in their company—but while he ordered his men to keep up the brutal and deadly shower, despatched twelve hands to launch his longest galley from the place where she lay, and headed them in person to overtake the fugitives. No sooner was his back turned, than the men, to their honour be it spoken, fired in such a way that it was impossible they could have hit any one.

Unfortunately, however, before the arrival of affairs at this desirable point, the boat had reached the side of the fishing vessels, and Nora Creina having been handed in, Miss Roebuck was in the act of following, when an unlucky ball striking her wrist, as she held by the rope, to get up the side, she was instantly precipitated into the water.

As the fishing-boat was of course riding head to wind, she naturally drifted astern with great rapidity. On the instant that Jack, who had been supporting her, beheld this accident, he sprang, without a moment's thought, into the waves after her, simply uttering the words, "Ben, my boy, pick us up."

To so good a swimmer as Jack Spratt, the task of saving his fair charge was one of little difficulty. Unfortunately, however, that of picking them up, was to the frightened fisherman one of a very different complexion: some time was lost before they were got on board; and no sooner had Jack Spratt put his foot on deck with Miss Roebuck on his arm, than he distinctly heard the measured cadence of Envee's long row-boat starting from the shore.

"Cut your cable, my boys, for your lives cut your cable," cried he, seeing the imminence of the danger, "cut your cable, if you spread only a handkerchief, and keep her up in the wind's eye, it's our only chance. Bear a hand, my blessed hearties—cut away—I'll pay the damage, and look sharp about it—for if you're caught, your vessel's seized, and every one of us 'll have to serve seven long years in the Fleet;—if we escape hanging for this job—I'll be up a helping you as soon as ever I've got this young lady below, and put a little bit of a termagent on her wounded wrist—Lord love her how it's bleeding—the bloodthirsty hell-hounds, to fire on a couple of poor gals!—if I could

make them swing for this, their necks should all become more acquainted with a hempen cravat, than ever their lips were with a paternoster."

As Jack Spratt said this he bore down to the cabin below the suffering form of Miss Roebuck. Fortunately the vessel did contain some slight apology for a sleeping-berth, and in one of these the wounded lady was laid.

The sight of her friend, in such a condition, called Nora Creina to her senses more rapidly than could any other restorative. While Jack, whipping off his neckcloth, formed what he called his "temporary termagent," thereby meaning a tourniquet; and having despatched this part of his duties, he left it to Nora to assist the sufferer in disrobing herself of her wet clothes, while he ran upon deck, and saw that the vessel was got under instant weigh. By dint of great activity, the few hands now on board contrived to get enough canvas spread to distance the powerful galley pulling after them.

As the fishing-boat, after weathering the nearest cape, ran dead before the breeze for the port of Liverpool, she achieved a speed of something less than ten miles an hour. The men in the row-galley, though urged to their utmost, were soon unable to keep up at this rate, when every additional furlong from the land made the seas heavier and the labour of pulling more severe.

With undisguised joy Jack Spratt beheld the boat of the enemy gradually sink into the distance, and the path of the future lay clear to what he termed "the course of himself and his young ladies."

His mind being now relieved from all further apprehensions respecting the chase, Mr. Spratt sent down a most polite message to the ladies below, to know if he might pay his respects to them. Leave being granted accordingly, Jack bribed one of the fishermen to furnish him with a Sunday suit; and duly arrayed in this, Don Quixote the second proceeded to pay his devoirs to his Senora del Toboso.

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## CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

### WHICH CONTAINS THE FIRST EPISODE—THE ADVENTURES OF JACK SPRATT.

At the time when Jack Spratt had undertaken to convey from durance vile two dames of high degree, it had never occurred to him that any matron should be wanting on board to give a sanction by her presence, or wait upon their wants. Miss Roebuck, more thoughtful, had however suggested this proceeding; but Mr. Spratt so loudly declared the impossibility of finding any female capable of retaining, for twenty-four hours, the secret of their intended flight, that she had, per force, given up her scruples. Two of the fishermen were luckily married; and still more luckily, some of their wives' habiliments, rude as they were, had been left on board, to afford the opportunity of a change of dress, in case of any accident similar to that which had now happened to one of our party.

Availing herself of these garments, Miss Roebuck, with Nora's assistance, in the course of an hour, was ready to receive Mr. Spratt, and return thanks for the deliverance he had effected for them.

Miss Roebuck certainly formed rather a curious figure, but hers was one of those few good hearts who make light of their own sorrows to prevent any disturbance of their neighbours' comforts; and much as she was suffering from the wound she had received, its superficial nature on the lower part of the wrist, enabled her to deceive her friend Nora into believing that she was little if at all hurt. Spratt having offered her a glass of warm spirits and water, she was fain to take it to keep down the shivering produced by her cold bath; then, by way of convincing her friends how slight was her wound, she insisted upon hearing a narrative of the immortal Spratt's adventures.

Jack, no ways loath, immediately sat down beside them round the little stove, and commenced as follows:—

### THE ADVENTURES OF JACK SPRATT.

"I dare say, ladies, you will be surprised to hear that you are labouring under a great deception on my behalf. Don't be alarmed, madams, I only allude to my name, which, though I am called Jack, is no more Jack than yours, but Hezekiah Spratt. The reason of this I will explain in due time, as it arises in the course of my adventures. My father was a hupholsterer, his shop was on Igh Olborn, but he had a willar at Pentonville. I had a fancy for the abberdashery line, and having finished my education early, was bound happrentice to Mr. Snizzle, the mercer of Ludgate-ill. For several years after this hauspicious event, I led a life of great tranquillity and appiness, and found my work tolerably easy, the prefession very hagreeable, and my master a most excellent gentleman; there was only one thing which at all threatened my prosperity, a matter productive of the worst consequences, like the cat to the Canary-bird."

"How, Mr. Spratt," faintly demanded Miss Roebuck, "what was that, pray let us have the whole of your eventful history." "Certainly, madams, nothing shall be concealed from you, only I feel a little bashfulness at commencing, like the author who reviewed himself. The truth was, I had such an unfortunate habit of attracting the regards of the ladies who came to the shop, that my master, who was a middle-aged bachelor of forty-two, or thereaway, grew absolutely jealous of my hattractions."

"'Mr. Spratt,' he would say to me when he asked me to supper; or sometimes, if he was in a very good humour, he would not say Mr. Spratt, but simply Hezekiah my boy, or you Spratt there! or the like of that, 'what is it the ladies see in your face that they should be so mighty partic'lar in noticing you?' 'Why, sir,' says I, 'you'll excuse me for mentioning it, sir,' says I, 'but it is'nt my face so much as my manner, what makes me so hirresistible like with the sex; they sees in my manner, sir,' says I, 'that I have studied the subject. You'll excuse me, sir,' said I, 'but the sex isn't learnt in a day. I've been some years at it, and know which side to take them at a

glance. Well, then, you see, ladies, he'd be asking me to give him a lesson.'

"Which of course, Mr. Spratt, you were kind enough to do."

"Why, yes, miss, I used to say to him, 'Mr. Snizzle,' said I, 'this is a subject which some men take to naturally, while others can never make anything of it all their lives long; as some gentlemen is killed at their first attempt at drowning, whilst others are often saved to get hanged. Again, sir, though all women are alike in the general width of their stuff, there's a greater diversity in their texture than ever yet was found 'twixt lawn and calico.'

"'With some, sir,' says I, 'you shall succeed, because you are rich; with others, sir, because you are poor; with one or two, because you are bashful, and many because you are handsome; while with a few, again, you shall bring yourself home, because you are either gallously impudent or distressingly hugly!'—and now, ladies, comes the great cause of my complaint! What do you think he said to me for all my kindness in assisting his ignorance?"

"Why, of course," cried both ladies at once, "he was infinitely obliged to you for your lesson, and acknowledged the truth of your observations with many thanks."

"Ay, ladies, that's what *ought* to have been done, like the rich relation's unsigned will: but instead of that, he rose from the table saying—and his falsehood and ingratitude in so doing I shall never forget—'Oh!' says he, 'if ignorance and impudence get on with the women, I can understand now, Mr. Spratt, the cause of your success.' Of course, after conduct like this, I could'nt hassociate any more with a person of his description; but as I saw where the shoe pinched, I determined he should have another corn or two on his foot before he was any easier. Accordingly, ladies, I saved up all my money, and came it a precious sight stronger in my outward man, as the saying is, than ever, till actually at last there were two ladies of quality came every week for me to try their gloves on, besides several other little matters, until at last one more beautiful than all the rest, who called herself the Countess of Doemkleen, used to have me to bring home patterns of silks and satins to her house, till master, finding it out, refused to let me go.

"It was just in the beginning of spring that I made the countess's acquaintance; and when she found out my master had put this unworthy restriction upon my liberty, she was kind enough to invite me to what she called her Sunday party: about the third Sunday after I had the pleasure of knowing her ladyship, she very generously offered to take me up the water to Richmond, where she said she would give me an unexpected treat. If I would excuse her going with me alone, she said, she would be much obliged to me, as she was not prepared yet to introduce me to her family. Oh! certainly, my lady, said I, by all means, the fewer people there are with us the more I shall enjoy your ladyship's society, so accordingly off we set. Now what, ladies, do you suppose was the treat, the unexpected treat, she was to give me?"

"Oh, Heaven knows, Mr. Spratt," said Nora, "pray don't wait for us to guess it.'

"Why, ladies, I think you'd be rather long about it, like the stone-mason, who offered to cut Mount Ætna into a statue of Alexander the coppersmith: I'm sure you'll hardly believe it, when I tell you, that as we were quietly rowing up the Thames, a pressgang boat shoved alongside our wherry; and without so much as giving me the king's compliments, told me, I must make my mind up for some years roughing it in the king's navy.

"Well, ma'am, I'd often heard of the pressgang, but never expected to make its acquaintance so suddenly; and so I should have thought, had I woke out of my sleep in Ludgate-ill, with the unicorn's horn sticking through my body; the first thing that I naturally did, was to turn round to the countess for protection. Ah! alas! beautiful young woman as she was, the pressgang was nothing to her conduct: there she sat, as cool as a cucumber, with her fingers cocked up at her nose, in a manner that might almost disgrace her sex; the conviction now forced itself upon me that I had been deceived: the thought was worse than death. I might have striven against the pressgang,—I might have struggled against misfortune,—but deception in a countess, such a tender quarter, struck me down, ma'am, flat as flounder. Perhaps this result may have been a little aided by a smartish blow I received, about the same time, from a stout oak cudgel,—I won't say but what it might: but what, ladies, is the head when the heart is struck: the last thing I saw was the countess enjoying the joke,—the last thing I heard was her ladyship saying, 'Here's a pretty go, Mr. Spratt,'—the last thing I thought of was how master would delight in the telling of it: the very thought that he perhaps might have plotted the whole affair, robbed me of every further power to resist. I do not even think I could have ventured into Ludgate-ill the next morning, even if I might, an unaccountable sort of feeling seemed to come over me; and when I came to my senses, I was half-way down to Sheerness;—from the large receiving vessel at the Nore, I was drafted into a gun-brig, going to the West Indies; and after one or two chops and changes, sent to that infernal hole,—axing your pardon, ladies,—from which we have just escaped, and where I hope it may please the pigs, in their infinite mercy, may we never be found again."

"To that most heartily Amen!" ejaculated both the ladies.

"And so say I, madams; and now I come to that part of my story which contains, as I said at first, a deception—the only one, I hope, you'll ever find in your devoted servant."

"What is it, Mr. Spratt?" said the others.

"Simply this, my real name is Hezekiah, and because nature has thought fit to give me a more splendid-looking head than most folks, my messmates in the first ship took occasion to turn it into a sort of profane jest upon my person; as I used to say to them, says I, you scurvy, axing your pardon, ladies, you scurvy rascals, says I, what is it after it all, take it at the worst, what is it? why it's only this, that nature has placed in my head the gold she meant to put in my pocket, but you, you dirty swabs, have gold neither in one place or the other."

"And a very spirited reply," said Nora, "but you have forgotten

to tell us what was the exact way in which your tormentors used to make these remarks about your head."

"Why, as to that, ma'am, it was so stupid I thought it was hardly deserving your notice. This was the way they used to come it, they'd watch while I was very busy about something or another, when one of the rascals would get his mouth close to my ear and bawl out loud enough to split my head—

"'Hezekiah, your head's a-fire.' Well, you know, ma'am, directly that was said, off used to go my coat, and away I used to pitch into 'em like a good 'un. The officers used to hear us, and away I was had up to the quarter-deck for fighting.

"'Please your honour, it's very hard,' says I to the captain, 'it's very hard that a man can't enjoy in peace and quietness, the scriptural name which his parents gave him, and which, as your honour knows, his godfathers and godmothers vouched for in the most hunobjectionable manner without being permiscously insulted every time in this scurrilous-like way.'

"Well, you see, madam, as I was always pretty smart in my small line, the captain could not deny but there was some reason in the matter, and for the first two fights I got off scot free, while the others got stuck in the black-list, but the third time the captain says, says he,

"'Hezekiah Spratt,' says he, 'if instead of Hezekiah Spratt, you were King Hezekiah himself, and came aboard my ship a-fighting, if I wouldn't flog him, may I be d—ned,' says he, asking your pardon, ladies, for them man-of-war captains you see are, as Othello says, very rude in their speech, very much so indeed, for they haven't had the advantage of an heducation like you and I, ladies; and so, says I to the captain, begging your honour's pardon, says I, 'There is only one way as I see to prewent the likes of it ever occurring again.'

"'What is that, sir?' says the captain.

"'Why, sir,' says I, 'it is for you to issue an order, changing the name that my godfathers and godmothers ——'

"'Damn your godfathers and godmothers,' says he, axing your pardon, ladies, 'you can talk to them about changing your name when you get back to them; you're come to the right shop to have your name changed; we'll not only change your name, but your skin also, young man, if you don't look sharp—boatswain's-mate, send this man's mess aft to the quarter-deck, all of them;' so, ladies, aft comes the whole mess with their hats off, and their long pig-tails hanging down.

"'Now men,' says the captain, 'Spratt's name is changed by my orders, and tell your shipmates, on the lower deck, that if any man in the ship, from enceforward, shall dare to call him Hezekiah again, I'll give him three dozen at the gangway.'

"'Now, Spratt,' says he to me, 'what name will you have instead?'

"'Why, your honour,' says I to him, 'as your honour's to be my new godfather and godmother both, I'll leave it to your honour's taste—but, if it's all the same to you, sir, I should like to have a short 'un this time, for then, at least there won't be so much room to play upon it.'

'There's something in that, Spratt,' says he; 'so you shall have the true sailor's name, Jack. Boatswain's-mate, draw a bucket of salt-water at the bows, and bring it aft here.'

"So when the water was brought, says he, 'Pour it over my godchild's head.' Now, ladies, this was the depth of winter, about the same time of the year as now, with the icicles hanging from the ship's cable, there stood I, not daring to move a peg, with the officers standing on one side of me, and my messmates on the other, and the captain looking as grim as blue-blazes—black list in his forehead—the cat-and-nine-tails in his eye, and six water grog inevitably dimpling about his mouth. As soon as the boatswain's-mate heard the word, no ways loath you may be sure, he soused the whole contents of his bucket on my head, all down my clothes.

"Talk of thunderbolts, ladies, I have a thorough conwiction a thunderbolt's a pleasant sensation compared to what I felt. Not a muscle did the captain move as he saw me drenched to the skin, and you may guess there was nobody else dared to move a muscle either.

"There, Mr. Jack Spratt, said the captain, you are now a new Christian, go below and enjoy your new name, the first man who dares to call you any other, shall make his apology to the cat-and-nine-tails.

"Thank your honour, said I, as well as I could, from the chattering of my teeth, I will, and, after this, it isn't your honour's fault if I don't go on swimmingly. As soon as ever the captain had turned his back, off cut my messmates down below; and you might think I was in a hurry to follow them, dripping as I was, only I heard the rascals laughing as I went down; therefore, I determined to take my time.

"Would you believe it, ladies, I had scarcely got on the lower-deck when the whole ship's company set up a regular chorus to this tune—

Jack Spratt could eat no fat,
His wife could eat no lean,
And so atwixt them both
They licked the platter clean.

I must say this was rather insulting to my mind: first, to see my captain's authority and then my feelings outraged; but, upon second thoughts, when I came to consider the poetry in that touching song, there was nothing in it near so personal as there was in the Hezekiah ballad; because, in the first place, it wasn't true that I could eat no fat: in those days I thought myself lucky to get any fat at all, even by itself; lean was a downright luxury; and as to fat and lean together, they were never seen in company a-board of a man-of-war, that I ever heard tell of; fat and lean there, even at the best of times, is so hard worked, they're only able to take it week and week about; nor needed I care for my wife, seeing as how Providence has never blest me with one yet; and it would be folly of me to take the troubles of matrimony without the blessings of it. After a week or so, I got quite used to hear the ballad sung about, and when my shipmates found they could not stir me up, as they called it, they gradually gave that game over. I have since lived to find Jack Spratt a very convenient sort of name, because it's both short and sweet, the only thing the captain ever gave

me—if I except a present of the opposite description, for being a little disguised in liquor."

"What was that, Mr. Spratt?" inquired Nora.

"Six dozen at the gangway, ma'am," replied Jack, "which, though I may be mistaken, appeared to me like the yard of pickled gherkin that choked the Halderman—werry long and werry sour. I have therefore continued to go by the name of Jack Spratt up to this time; and, unless it should accidentally happen, ma'am, that the lady I marry should require it to be changed in respect of any ereditary property she may possess, I think it very likely I may still continue to be Jack Spratt till I shake off the mortal coil,—axing your pardon, ladies, for using the expressive language of Oliver Cromwell."

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## CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

### THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE WOUND.

As Jack Spratt concluded the little narrative of his adventures, a considerable noise on deck was heard;—"Hollo!" said Jack, "there's something gone amiss; excuse me, ladies, for a few minutes; it's very odd those stupid fellows can't do anything without me; and snatching up his hat in a hurry, and apologising for the necessity of the occasion, he left the ladies to their own resources, and was soon heard actively engaged on the deck above, where by a sudden change in the wind a sail had been split, and the assistance of all the crew was required in replacing it.

While Jack Spratt had continued the narrative of his adventures, the excitement of listening and the intense joy which a sense of freedom brought with it, enabled Miss Roebuck to conceal the excessive and increasing pain she was suffering. By degrees however the fever of her frame and the flush on her cheek had been increasing, the shivering of her limbs also had become more frequent and severe; until at last when the two girls were left alone, she became wholly unable to disguise from Nora the fact of her being exceedingly ill. Though woman as we have seen of no ordinary courage and presence of mind, her symptoms were still further exacerbated by knowing that no help was at hand, how dire soever the emergency that required it; nor even any of the usual simple remedies of art in her possession.

Accustomed in her own neighbourhood to see and relieve much of the sickness of the poor around her, she naturally thought of trying a dose of opium, but reflecting that the bottle of laudanum with some other simple medicines had been left behind, she forbore to mention it to her companion, for fear of needlessly increasing those troubles under which she knew she must be labouring. It was not till after two hours of the most intense agony that she recalled the desperate remedy under which Nora had proposed to find refuge from

the various woes that threatened them in their captivity.—No words can do justice to the transports with which she poured out and swallowed a powerful dose of this heavenly medicine; and as its magic influence displayed itself, first in a rapid amelioration of pain, then in tears of joy, and lastly in an exquisite sensation of repose, she could not help considering it, as many a maddened wretch has done before, and will again, one of the very greatest blessings with which Providence has compensated the sufferings of mankind.

"Thank God for opium," was the frequent exclamation of one of the greatest benefactors of his race, the illustrious John Hunter.—How strange beside the language of this enlightened personage appears the ignorant denunciation of a semi-barbarous nation against the same drug!* yet both probably arising from equally strong instances—the former of its benefits—the latter of its abuse.

As soon as Jack Spratt had attended to those various matters which required his presence on deck, he collected all the best materials that could be found in his humble ship for the repose of his fair passengers. Miss Roebuck was not only already accommodated, but now wrapped in a deep slumber. To Nora, however, this attention of her deliverer was highly acceptable, and availing herself of it without delay, she too indulged in all the delights of a sleep secure from any fear of interruption, and when they awoke in the morning, were greeted with the glad intelligence that a few more hours would bring them into port.

This information did not, however, arrive before it was sadly necessary. Miss Roebuck's slumbers had terminated soon after dawn, and when Nora awoke a few hours later, her grief may easily be imagined at finding her friend in a state of delirium. With a sinking heart, she sat beside the rude couch of the wounded girl, and causelessly accused herself of the misfortune that had befallen her.—Relief, however, there was none, till such time as their humble bark should reach its destination; when Nora having summoned medical assistance, before she would allow her to disembark, learned rather from the looks, than the expressions of the surgeon, the existence of extreme danger.

Nothing but the urgency of the case induced him for a moment to contemplate removing her, until more favourable symptoms arose; but in a crowded merchant dock, and a wretched fishing-smack without any accommodation, what could be more miserable than the position of two girls like our friends, accustomed to every refinement! With the deepest misgivings as to the result, he slowly yielded his own opinion, and allowed her removal to take place to some obscure lodgings, which Jack Spratt had, under Nora's directions, selected in one of those narrow lanes, since swept away by the large and extensive alteration.

Sensible of the risks that had been run by the humble fisherman who brought them over, a large portion of Nora's money had been expended in making him an adequate remuneration. The slender stock remaining she resolved to hoard with the utmost parsimony, till

* See the letter from the Chinese authorities to Her Majesty the Queen.

she should hear from Sir Job Periwinkle. Several times during their late confinement through the agency of Jack Spratt she had written to the worthy baronet, but receiving no answer, imagined as a matter of course that her letters had been intercepted; with renewed hope, therefore, the day after their arrival, she indited a fresh epistle to Sir Job, and that no mistake might occur, took it to the post-office herself;—till the answer should arrive that would deliver her from all her perplexities,—she sedulously devoted herself to watching the sick bed of her kind friend.

It is difficult, amid the many sorrows that beset us in this world, to select any one and say, "This is the worst"—but how numerous will be the class of those who can safely affirm that none are more trying, more wearing, more severe, than sitting by the bedside of one we love, and marking the ravages of a febrile disease!—The flushed face—the burning hand—the closed and throbbing eye—the limbs restlessly thrown from side to side in futile search of that repose which nature so much and vainly requires—the feeble moan of agony at every respiration that prolongs the struggle—the symptoms hourly becoming worse, and of a more deadly character—nay, even the very remedies employed to check the disease—all wring to the very soul the tender ministrant of the invalid; but when we have mutely seen the pain of one remedy after another—when the life blood of the beloved friend has flowed, till the spirit seems temporarily to forsake its tenement—the tongue too weak to perform its office, and the blanched and pallid limbs, motionless from inanition, and the frequent torture of nauseous drugs inflicted with a view to final relief—when through all this sea of sorrow, the attached watcher has borne the trial and in vain—when over all these last remedies the triumphant disorder attacks the brain, and the almost powerless lips give utterance to the wildest wanderings of a disordered fancy—how heart-rending is the task to sit by and dry those tears which flow for one that we behold—almost writhing, as it were, in the grave!—Thus sat—thus watched—thus mourned, Nora over her friend—till, on the second morning, the surgeon announced, that which he had long dreaded—an attack—namely, of locked jaw.

Up to this hour, Nora, in despite of every warning circumstance, had vainly hoped for a favourable termination of her friend's illness. Short as their acquaintance had been, it was endeared particularly to our heroine, by so many traits of kindness on the part of Miss Roebuck, that the bare possibility of her being thus suddenly snatched away, seemed too frightful almost for belief. Slender as her means were hourly becoming, she insisted on the confirmation of further medical opinion before she would in any way regard the probability of that termination, which was now foretold her. But human science had in this case attained its limits: after lingering for many hours in agony most excruciating to witness, Nora found herself, at the conclusion of a day of almost senseless sorrow, weeping over the inanimate form of her late friend.

## CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

### ANOTHER PHASIS OF THE PRESSGANG.

Much as man may pride himself on his mental superiority to circumstances, no one who has observed life closely can fail to discover his chameleon dependence on and relation to them; it would naturally be imagined that in grief, at least, this fact might cease. But it is not so; in grief, more than in anything else, this tendency of the mind will be perceived. The being that we lose when everything is bright around us, may be mourned over intensely at the time; but a thousand and vivid excitements are ready to stimulate the mind in the too welcome exercise of forgetfulness. In solitude or poverty—too often synonymes—this cannot be so; the little wealth the mourner did possess, is dissipated by the stroke that snatched the being who by sharing yet increased the store. In such a situation then as Nora's, what could be more unfortunate than this bereavement; or who possibly could have felt it more?

If sudden grief possessed the capability which is so often attributed to it, of destroying its victim, most assuredly Nora Creina would have slept in the same humble grave that swallowed up at once her little fortune and her devoted friend. But it is not so. The power that sent us here to suffer and to mourn, seems to have ordained that grief alone shall rarely have the mercy to destroy. How many blighted and desolate hearts have felt the truth of this! How many have given themselves up to the full tide of sorrow, in hopes that it might bear their ruined barks to that dim oblivious shore, where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest!"

Next to the deep grief felt by Nora, that of the sensitive Jack Spratt fairly comes in for our regard. Day by day, and hour by hour, he watched in the kitchen of their humble lodgings, turning his hand to every use that could well be named beneath the sun, and gliding to and fro with shoeless feet, and the most devoted readiness. During the whole of the night, this faithful creature remained listening for the slightest noise in the invalid's room, to call up the domestic, or reimplore the assistance of the surgeon; and when everything was over, he and his young mistress, as he called Nora, followed Miss Roebuck to the grave: but great as were his sorrows within doors, he was not, unfortunately, exempt from some equally serious without. He had scarcely landed in Liverpool, when he learned, to his infinite dismay, that his old friends, the Pressgang, were particularly active in providing for all those who seemed in the least degree wanting employment. The first care of Jack Spratt, therefore, was to buy what he called some long-tailed toggery; and within half an hour of being harrowed by the intelligence we have named, the London prentice

stepped ashore a spruce land gentleman, in a green coat with brass buttons, a yellow waistcoat, a red belcher silk handkerchief round his neck, a pair of drab trowsers, and long boots.

"Shiver my timbers," said Jack, as he landed,—"shiver my timbers if they 'll ever find out what I am under all this toggery;" and Jack stepped out on the quay with a moral courage and audacity that would have done honour to the most desperate of ministers in the most desperate of minorities.

Unfortunately, however, for our friend Jack Spratt, there was about his figure a jaunty sort of devil-may-care-swing, about his arms a villanously nautical stick-a-kimboish propensity, that smacked strongly of the tar: and altogether it is clear there was something imprudent in his character in trusting himself so freely abroad, while, to use his own expression, "the press was so hot." A sad and long debate had Jack held with himself as to whether or no he should cut off his pig-tail.

"'Tis dangerous," said Jack, "I know 'tis very dangerous, but hang me if I can bring my heart to do it; I know of no animal yet that ever cuts his own tail off, and curse me if a Jack Tar should be worse than the brutes: the only thing that comes at all nighest it, that I know of, is the beaver, and that never docks itself till the last pinch; so, if the beaver can wait, I'm sure I can:" and accordingly Jack tucked the dangerous object of his adoration underneath his clothes, shirt and all; quite convinced that the British public would no more take him for a man-of-war's-man, than a Chinese mandarin. How far he was right in this supposition, and how far wrong, we shall have an opportunity of observing.

Every morning after breakfast, while Nora had been attending on her lamented friend, Jack Spratt, by his mistress's desire, set off to the post-office, to ascertain if there were any letters. On the day of the funeral, the mournful hurry caused this usual avocation to be delayed; but, as soon as the burial was concluded, Jack found himself in his aforesaid green coat, and black hatband (for Nora had been too poor to afford him any additional mourning), standing at the door of his young "Missus's" miserable residence, while Nora, indulging in a flood of useless but irrepressible grief, mourned in her own room the loss of the only friend she possessed; a loss embittered by the ceaseless recollection that it was in her emergencies the fatal accident had arisen.

"Well," muttered Jack to himself, as he stood rubbing his eye with the corner of his sleeve, "as the poor young lady is overboard, hammock and all, it 's no use my standing here blubbering like a young boy, just a-going off to school; she's dead and buried, that's sartain, there's no getting her out of dock any more, so now I'd better go and whet my whistle, and see what letters there are at the postesses for young Mistress Nora,—uncommon fine young lady surely, and so was poor Miss Roebuck; though nothing near so fine as Mistress Nora. I think the father of that young babby might have been a little brisker-like in stepping forward, instead of leaving his young wife to rough it out here all alone."

While Jack was thus musing on the fancied wrongs of one he knew

nothing about, as the kind world are generally pleased to do, he suddenly felt violent hands laid on himself behind, a huge hoarse laugh seemed to celebrate the deed, and when he turned about to remonstrate, he found himself confronted with seven or eight bluff-looking beings of his order—not of the green coat and black hatband tribe—no such luck awaited him, but in their place half-a-dozen myrmidons of the sea.

As Jack was no less sharp than short, an accompaniment which, funnily enough, generally goes together, he soon discovered that he was in bad company—or, in other words, that he had fallen into the hands of his old friends, the Pressgang. Most men so taken aback would by some sudden exclamation or sea-oath, most irremediably have discovered themselves. Not so Jack Spratt. Very wisely he took a moment's thought what part he ought to act, and then instantly seizing his cue, paused for a few seconds to recover his breath (for he had been walking quickly), and then gravely said, with the best Ludgate-hill manner he could at the moment summon—"Excuse me, gentlemen, but I think you've made a mistake,—what do you want with me?"

"A mistake is it?" cried a brawny Irish boatswain's-mate, "faith and it's yourself has made the mistake then, I'm thinking anyhow, Jack, this time."

"Jack, gentlemen," said Spratt, in great alarm lest he had been recognised, "Jack, gentlemen, my name's Hezekiah."

"O!" bawled half-a-dozen at once, "you may be Obadiah, if you like, or Jeremiah!"

"Ay," said the boatswain, "but take my word, if your name aint Jack now, it soon will be; for all your long togs that you've got on; if you don't know what it is to go aloft and reef topsails, I'm a Dutchman, and that's not probable, seeing I was born in the Cove of Cork."

"Gentlemen! gentlemen!" said Jack, "there surely must be some mistake; who are you? what are you? what do you want?"

"Faith, an we're Jack Tars, commonly called the Pressgang; all that we want is a hundred or two of men, and, by my soul, you're one of them."

"Sailors! Pressgang!" said Jack, acting his part most inimitably, "I know nothing about the sea or sailors either, thank God; and if you are what you pretend to be, you must know very well that you've no right to take me. I'm a peaceable citizen, an aberdasher, come down to Liverpool on business from London, where I served my time with Mister Snizzle, one of the livery of London, of Ludgate-ill—"

"Haberdasher be d——d," roughly cried the boatswain; "do haberdashers usually wear their yard-measures tucked in here;" and rudely inserting his fingers and thumb underneath Jack Spratt's coat-collar, he pulled out his long pig-tail, to the infinite amusement of all the bystanders; a prodigious shout followed the production of this piece of circumstantial evidence, and so great was its effect, that for a time it seemed to deprive even Jack Spratt of his usual presence of mind. At last, as soon as he could recover himself a little, the thoughts of

Nora Creina, and the desolate situation to which she would be reduced if deprived of his services, determined him to make one more struggle for his liberty. "Gentlemen, gentlemen," cried he, as they dragged him off, "do not condemn me for my hair; that was a whim of my respected master, Mr. Snizzle; he always wore a pig-tail himself, and so made all his apprentices do the same; I merely tucked it in when I came down to Liverpool—because—because—" and here Jack's vocabulary becoming exhausted, he made a most unfortunate break down.

— "Because why, you little spalpeen?" said the boatswain, seeing how entirely he was at a loss.

"Because, sir," suddenly said Jack, catching at the first reason that suggested itself, because the streets of Liverpool are so crowded, I thought it might be in the way."

"Here's a pretty go," cried the boatswain: "I say, my hearties, here's a pretty go. So the streets of Liverpool are grown too small to hold such a little spalpeen as this without tucking his pigtail under his collar, as a beaten hound does his ears."

"Oh! lug along brave alderman Snizzle," cried some other of the gang. "I'll be sworn, as soon as we get him in deep water, he'l be coming forward and asking for a petty officer's rating, on the score of old services."

"I tell you what, my boy," said the boatswain, "this footman in livery, Snizzle—or whatever you call him,—it's my opinion that he never could have taught you to tie up your tail in this sailor-like fashion, unless so be, you'd either been at sea yourself, or Providence had born you for it: so either way, it does'nt much signify—come along, and no more of your gammon."

"Well, gentlemen," said Jack, who was now growing desperate, "you shall answer to your officer for this outrage."

"Ay, ay, my boy, with all my heart; and what's more than that, most likely, d'ye see, the officer 'll answer to you: come, come, move along your stumps,—or must we help you? you'll find our help rather rough work, I guess."

"Well then, gentlemen, since you will give yourself this trouble, and press the wrong man, at least allow me a few minutes to prepare: I have a young lady."

"O! to be sure you have: so have we all—we've all young ladies—so don't try that blarney any more: I wonder you don't say you'll come back again."

"So I will, my boy; upon my soul and honour I will."

"Oh! beggar your soul and honour: whoever heard of a haberdasher having either honour or soul: come, come along—you've told lies enough already: you've told your peckful—and you know that's full allowance for one morning."

As all argument seemed now to have failed, Jack, like all other diplomatists, finally resorted to the worst and most frequent—force. But here he literally had not a single chance,—which indeed he might have seen from the first,—still the remembrance of Nora Creina seemed to render him so desperate, that he fought like a little tiger; and it was

not till he got knocked down, and most severely cudgelled, that his merciless enemies succeeded in carrying off his breathless and nearly insensible body.

Thus, then, by this cruel exercise of one of the vilest laws that ever disgraced England, was Nora, the young and inexperienced mother, left without a single friend or protector, in the midst of a crowded city, where her youth, her beauty, and her misfortunes, most rendered both necessary. Is it possible that the pen of man can command any language too strong to reprobate the practice of impressment? How long will men, boasting themselves attached to freedom, sanction the existence of a usage that annihilates freedom's dearest rights to a great portion of this mighty empire? Let us consider for what purpose the pressgang was first brought into operation?—without allowing ourselves to be blinded with the sophisms by which knavery has cloaked its misdeeds from the eyes of fools: it has been simply this:—

The rich found themselves under the necessity of being protected against becoming the lawless spoil of the invader;—it was a danger, certainly to be much apprehended, and carefully shunned—but how did they effect this? Had they the courage to propose fighting themselves for their own goods?—certainly not; cunning, not courage, was their distinguishing characteristic; and they therefore found it more agreeable to enjoy than to protect their property. Being then without valour to defend themselves, had they at least the common honesty to confess their weakness, and make it worth the while of others to defend their property for them?

No! honesty was as much out of their line as bravery; but, being possessed of money, or, in other words, the power of tyrannizing over the ignorant many by the instrumentality of the debased few, they determined to hire a set of sordid bravoes, to kidnap the most defenceless of their fellow-subjects; and having so kidnapped, send them to fight, whether they would or no, in defence of that property which they were too timid to protect in person, and too dishonest to pay others voluntarily to preserve.

They thus decreed, that the poor wretches whom they seized, should pass a life of the most incredible hardship and distress, and be exposed at every moment of such an unbearable life, to risk their limbs—their health—their existences, for the interests of their merciless betrayers; and furthermore, be made to shed the blood of beings who had never injured them, and against whom they had not the barest grounds of any rational enmity. In addition to all this sum of monstrous atrocity, these unhappy wretches were torn from their families—whole classes dependent on their exertions were left without protection or support, and abandoned to every species of misery, destitution, and crime.

When the eloquent thunders of Burke and Sheridan were launched against the crimes and iniquities practised in our Indian empire, doubtless there were brought to light scenes of depravity and bloodshed, which, to the unprejudiced reasoner, might at first seem to leave in the shade outrages like those we have attempted to portray. Yet, on a calm reflection, would

it not have been more merciful—more enlightened—more humane—nay almost even less impious, to have put to death, upon the spot, many of those poor wretches, who have been carried off under the violating authority of the pressgang, to perish beneath the stabs of the enemy—the lingering diseases of pestilential climates—the slow tortures of broken-hearted misery, and even the lingering despair of a prisoner's dungeon?

Taking this view of it, we solemnly put it to our readers, whether anything more horrible or revolting than such a system can be pointed out in those enormities, the mere relation of which, from the glowing lips of Sheridan, was sufficient to paralyze the British senate.

And in considering this subject, we should always remember, that the deeds in India were crimes against the law,—known, complained of, mourned and lamented as such at the time. The pressgang, on the contrary, has been acknowledged, by competent authorities, to be an outrage, which custom and submission have made part and parcel of the law of the land. Thus, while it still remains, it is an idle and an empty falsehood to say that we are a free people.

It is true that a certain portion of us may enjoy a very large extent of the most rational freedom :—but while this remains contingent upon the accidental circumstance of a man's being born out of a certain needy and depressed sphere, we know as little of the real principles of liberty as do the Russians; with whom it is a matter of blind chance whether a man be born the merest serf, with not an hour's secure purchase of his life, or the Czar, with absolute power over the lives of all around him. It is true that in peace this question may seem of little import; but it is only in peace that an opportunity is afforded a nation of providing a proper resource against the demands of a sudden war.

We have lived happily to see the termination of slavery in this empire; and the next head of this hydra-brood, to be crushed, is impressment. It merely requires that the pay and treatment of our navy should be made commensurate with the dangers and hardships to which it is exposed, and then, let the emergency be ever so great, there will always be found a joyous band of gallant spirits, ready to crowd its ranks, without recourse to any expedient half so slavish, revolting, tyrannical, and disgraceful, as the pressgang.

## CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

### CONTAINS A SURPRISE.

"SURELY, some accident must have happened to him, or he never would delay his return thus, hour after hour," muttered Nora, as anxiously awaiting Sprat's return, she gazed mournfully on the fire before her, and carefully watched the slumbers of her child: the latter, little conscious of the sorrows of its parent, slept smilingly in its tiny couch.

Again and again as the sorrowful apprehensions caused by Sprat's absence presented themselves, did Nora turn to her helpless little companion, and shudder at that picture of desolation which her fancy painted in store for them both, should anything have happened to her only protector. The short day of winter came to an early close, and still found her fertile in imagining causes for his absence;—six,—seven,—eight o'clock arrived, and yet she remained sedulously trying to believe that the meeting of some old companion, or the sense of freedom, succeeding his late comparative confinement, might have induced him to forget the hour; but the thought that his absence might be final, occasionally intruded itself upon her with all the accompaniment of despair. When at length, however, the unvarying hand of time pointed to midnight, all her hope and fortitude were no longer able to continue the cheat upon her fears.

Convinced that some further calamity had followed in the train of the host which had so long oppressed her, she now rapidly gave way to all those bitter pangs which long sustained suspense so certainly inflicts. With the bitterest tears of agony and despair, she clasped her infant to her bosom, and besought Heaven for that last relief which no affliction can impugn.

Won by her gentle manners and kind affection, which she seemed unable to withhold from any around her, the ignorant, but warm-hearted landlady had formed a strong affection for her beautiful and distressed lodger, and endeavoured by all the art in her power to represent Sprat's absence as a mere temporary accident, which the approach of morning would doubtlessly remedy.

"Lor bless your heart, ma'am," said Mrs. Clackit, "when you know as much of sailors as I do, you'll soon find there's very little kind of dependence to be placed either on their comings or goings."

"Don't blame him, Mrs. Clackit," replied Nora, her tears scarcely permitting her words to be heard, "I'm sure he is not in fault."

"But I say, ma'am, that he is very much indeed. A good-for-nothing, rattling Jack. Why, there now, in my time I've had three sailor-husbands, besides one marine, as came a cruiting; and there

wasn't one of them, if a glass of grog met him at the corner of the street, as wouldn't keep me hours and hours from my natural repose, without the least conscience. Ay, that's right, ma'am, do let me see you smile again," as Nora, irresistibly tickled by the idea of a glass of grog meeting a man round a corner, was unable to repress this effect of the ridiculous.

"Why, ma'am, I've known them sometimes as much as three days or a week, at a drinking bout together."

"Whatever may have happened, I'm convinced that nothing of this sort has now occurred. I am sure Sprat never would willingly have added the horrors of suspense to the other miseries I have to endure."

"No, no, ma'am, I don't mean to say that Mr. Sprat would stop out for a week, or even three days; but its the problest thing in the world, that he should like to have a night's spree after putting the poor dear corpse to ground. A nice young woman she was, too—if she could but have opened her mouth anyways."

"Lor, ma'am, don't go crying again; who'd have thought now that the mere mention of poor Miss Thingumbob!—well, I never!—Lor, ma'am, do smell to the salts—there, ma'am, you'll be better now. So as I was going to tell you, my first husband went off one fine morning, just as Mr. Sprat may have done, and I never set eyes on him again. My second did behave more of a gentleman than that; he did give me a week's notice that he was going to sail for the West Indies; but what happened to him there have always been an object of great consarn to me, as about a month after I married my third, I heard that the young man had died of the yallow favour at Jamikay;—that's the place where the molasseys comes from, you know, Miss, therefore, though these sea-folks do go off sometimes on a long cruise, without giving nobody no satisfying sort of warning, still I thinks Mr. Sprat will be back to-morrow morning somehow or some, if not before; I've left a light burning below a purpose for him. Lor bless me, I shouldn't wonder if that's Mr. Sprat come drunk with a double knock." As the inimitable comforter, Mrs. Clackit, said this, she rose with wondrous celerity, and without upsetting more than one table and two chairs, and only rousing up the baby into a state of vocal activity, an exercise generally considered much finer for the performer's lungs, than for the ears of the audience; the landlady bustled down stairs to her front door, to admit the party who had just claimed entrance, by a loud and repeated rap, and who, she supposed, full of ire at the thought, to be Jack Sprat, in *propria persona*. Landladies are wonderful animals, they have a perfect instinct at taking people in; but Mrs. Clackit had for once deceived herself.

True it was, that she had kept open her house, as she informed our heroine, till the latest minute;—true it also was, that she had kept a light brightly burning, like a sailor's beacon, to direct what she plainly foresaw would be the wandering footsteps of the absentee; but true it is not, that the absentee saw or had the least chance of seeing all the care that was had for his edification, he being many miles distant on the salt sea, infinitely against his inclination, and only able in sweet

yet bitter fancy, to return to the humble, but now highly-estimated lodging of Nancy Clackit.

Who then was the bold intruder on the chaste precincts of the triple widow's hearthstone, is a matter for our grave inquiry.

As midnight stole over the—even then—large and populous city of Liverpool, on the evening in question, the bright starlight of the frost-cleared heavens fell upon the countenance of a wanderer that has rarely been surpassed, either in the perfection of its beauty, or the intense and hopeless expression of misery that it wore; long dark silken curls clustered around the suffering brow, and fell behind on the collar of the ill-fitting coat its owner wore; the steady but gentle breeze, whose icy coldness seemed sufficient to drive life even from the hardest forms, here poured its unpitying wrath upon the slight and scantily-clad figure of a youth, to all appearance little more than seventeen years of age.

A convulsive shudder crept over the bosom of the poor boy, as the nipping blast of winter swept across it; and while, seemingly undecided which way to bend his steps, he paused for awhile against the railings of an old church that stood in his path, and clasping his hands upon them, partly as if for support, and partly as if in silent supplication to the merciful Divinity, whose glorious resting-place we are accustomed to typify in the magnificent heaven above us, tear after tear rolled slowly down those beardless cheeks!—faultless in all that makes the beauty of the outward soul, saving only those bright colours with which Joy loves to decorate her dwelling; fitfully and with many a bitter quiver did those exquisitely formed lips fashion the accents to which grief and agony could give no voice; with fearful impotence did those young, attenuated, and fairy fingers clutch the time-worn iron that yielded them their only support; brightly was the cloudless starlight of the firmament reflected in the glittering drops of human agony, that silvered the hallowed dust on which they fell!

O heaven! on how many scenes like this have the pure and untainted spirits that fill thy purple void looked down. With no other witnesses than the bright orbs above us, how often has innocence bewailed its trials—remorse atoned for guilt—affliction offered up the holy evidence of affection—and bitter pride poured down the libations of a humbled heart upon the ashes of sacrificed ambition! While the agitated youth was still remaining lost in the bewilderment of speechless suffering, a hand was laid upon his shoulder. Startled by the touch he turned quickly round, and found beside him one of those unfortunate females on whose horrible resource the bitterest mockery has inflicted the name of pleasure. In an instant the whole aspect of the youth was changed; from features formed to express with the most perfect fidelity, every feeling of the human heart, the deepest grief seemed instantaneously changed to all that the countenance can express, of the deepest loathing and dismay. Shrinking from the clasp of simulated desire, as if pollution dwelt in the merest presence of such familiarity, the lad retreated, step by step, as the unfortunate female wooed him to her companionship! He uttered no word to the syren's solicitation, but wresting his arm from her grasp, turned hastily about and fled.

Before he had proceeded many yards, the exertion seemed too much for so weak a frame; and precipitately pausing, he flung himself back into the shadow caused by the projection of a tottering house, near which he stood. A perfect quiet reigned through the deserted streets; and from the total absence of any pursuing footsteps, the runaway seemed to gather fresh courage; stealing forth from the nook in which he had found shelter, he began to look around him. Over the houses at a little distance, he could plainly perceive the masts of the shipping; while the lane in which he stood was composed of houses which, though they might once have seen a better destiny, appeared now only suited to the middle portion of the seafaring class, and sadly ruinous from the double agency of time and neglect.

After listening for a few seconds, as if to detect whether he had been followed, the young man, apparently satisfied that he was left master of his own actions, began narrowly to scrutinise the building that had sheltered him. Long-peaked gables projected into the street, while the lattice-window on the first floor revealed, every few seconds, the intermittent light of a fire within. In this room also, as the stranger listened, voices in conversation were very plainly to be distinguished, while a light dimly burning in the lower part of the house, might have appeared to proclaim, that the family within had not yet retired to rest. Be that as it may, the stranger approached the window, and examining a little bill that hung within for the enlightenment of an ignorant generation, he there with some difficulty managed to peruse the following correct specimen of English and orthography :—

"*An bedroom to let bak—Equire within.*"

Comforted by this extremely erudite assurance, the stranger, without further hesitation, pealed forth upon the door that double knock which the landlady had so charmingly interpreted, not only as a proof of Jack Sprat's return, but also of his sobriety.

"I'll trim his jacket for him, I warrant it, a drunken, lazy, sculk ashore rascal," muttered the landlady, as in all the zeal of wrath she hastily descended the stairs,—"I'll teach him what it is to keep an honest woman, and a beautiful young lady waiting up for him in this way;"—then bawling out in the shrill tones of an habituated scold, as she got near the door,—"I wonder you an't ashamed of yourself, Mr. Jack Sprat!" Here she began to undo the chains and bolts, and at each part of the operation she continued her gentle admonition;—"What is it, I say, you mean, Mr. Sprat, by coming home this time of night drunk and disorderly? Come in, come in, you misbehaving blackguard, or I'll break your head, Mr. Sprat, that's what I will." As Mrs. Clackit completed this gentle insinuation, she threw wide the door, a soft and gentle footstep was heard upon the passage, a delicate light figure advanced before her, and one of the most sweet and melancholy voices that ever thrilled upon the ear replied—

"It is not Mr. Sprat."

Had the dreariest ghost of her house's former inhabitants appeared before Nancy Clackit, she could not have experienced more deadly

terror than seemed to gather in her countenance, as she surveyed the pale but exquisite features of the youth before her; she would have adjured certain of the saints to assist and defend her; she would have inquired what was demanded; but before she had time to recover from her surprise, the stranger gently interrogated her as to whether she had not a bed-room to let out, and what were the terms for which it was to be rented.

"The terms," repeated Mrs. Clackit, surveying with unmitigated wonder the would-be-lodger from head to foot,—"the terms are six shillings a week; but at this time of night——"

"I take them at once," interrupted the youth, cutting short all further remarks upon the unseasonable hour of application; and with the same view of terminating the idle discussion, he walked past his future landlady saying, "Be pleased to light me up stairs, I'll take possession of my room at once." Overawed by the sudden demand of the stranger, and the manifest superiority of a higher order which prevailed in his manner, Mrs. Clackit knew not what to do; while she was yet hesitating, the stranger pulled from his pocket a small golden coin.

"That's to pay the first week in advance," said he, slipping the universal orator into Mrs. Clackit's hands; before she could give him any sort of notice that such a course would be agreeable, or the contrary, he was rapidly mounting up the old oak staircase, and about to enter Nora's room. "Not there, sir, Lord love your handsome face, not there, sir," said Mrs. Clackit, with that degree of undisguised flattery, by which the lower orders prove all their knowledge of the usefulness of adulation, without the possession of that dexterity so necessary for its perfect success.

"Turn to your right, sir, if you please," pointing to a narrow winding ascent, that led from the principal staircase.

"I fear this old house of yours is so cold, landlady, I shall require a fire."

"You shall have it, sir," said Mrs. Clackit, whose heart the gold had softened beyond all expression;—"it won't take me long to light, the things are all close at hand—there, sir, there you are—take two steps down to your left, and there's your room." At the mention of two steps down, the new lodger very prudently paused, and allowed his conductress to proceed before him.

The chamber into which she entered, as far as the insufficient light enabled him to look round it, was one into which no unhallowed hand of modern improvement had seemingly found courage to enter;—it was large and gloomy to a degree, and whether a half, or only a quarter of a century had elapsed since it was conscious of repair, was a question which its new tenant might solve at leisure;—the gables of the roof were arched over it, the timbers being left naked to the eye, and terminating in long pendant groinings, at the end of which a hideous abortion of a face was by the original carpenter sculptured to represent his idea of finish. The furniture of the room was of the same grim and melancholy order, and comprised in the simple articles of two high-backed chairs, and a bed; how the latter had first been placed there, whether

banished from some more important mansion, imported over sea by some Dutch emigrant, or thrust out of the way as lumber, no one knew. In these modern times, when the fluctuations of taste have revisited the massive and picturesque styles to which it belonged, the proprietor of the house might, doubtless, have realised a fair two years' rent by its sale; but now, disliked for its gloominess, its poetical associations despised, and its heavy fantastic beauty undervalued, it had been thrust up in the old garret as the best society for the varied ghosts which were supposed to haunt them both. In a few minutes, Mrs. Clackit, bustling about, succeeded in kindling on the wide deep hearth a fire composed of the splintered fragments of broken-up ships; and having aired the stranger's bed, as far as such an impracticable thing was possible, she proffered, in vain, those materials for supper which her house afforded; and hearing these severally and repeatedly refused, left the joyless tenant of the haunted garret to seek such miserable repose, as was to be found between the heavily-carved pillars of the old oak couch.

With all the garrulity of an inveterate gossip, Mrs. Clackit seized the opportunity thus afforded her, of running down into Nora's room, and communicating in the usual style of exaggeration, every possible particular respecting the new-comer. "Such a handsome gentleman! such a very handsome gentleman! so soft in his manner! such eyes! such hair! such generosity! even to his very money! such a very handsome gentleman it had never been the lot of Mrs. Clackit to behold before!"

As for poor Nora, little cared she who this handsome gentleman might be; it was enough for her that no one, fairly entitled to the term of a handsome gentleman, could by any possibility turn out Jack Sprat; as for the landlady, Jack Sprat had already vanished from her remembrance; and even the poor dear corpse was banished by the handsome gentleman in the second floor back; while thus then indifference and ingratitude were struggling in the first floor front, the silence of midnight was suddenly disturbed by a faint cry, distinctly audible on the quiet staircase, followed by a heavy fall that shook the old building in every timber.

"Gracious Heavens!" cried the landlady, starting up in horror, "it's the handsome gentleman! I was afeard that them ghosts would never let him take possession of that bed quietly."—Thirty thousand horrors seemed to possess the soul of the triple widow, at the bare possibility of such a catastrophe;—starting from her seat, and seizing a candle, she rushed to the door, extinguished the flame in endeavouring to go out herself, and ran up the stairs with all the activity of widowed forty-five, rushing to the rescue of a handsome gentleman. Nora distinctly heard her enter the second floor back, scream loudly, tumble about very wildly, and then rush down stairs again. "O ma'am," cried Mrs. Clackit, brandishing the extinguished candle in one hand, and declaiming fiercely with the other, "the handsome gentleman's no gentleman!"

"Heavens! Mrs. Clackit, what has he done?" cried Nora, starting up in alarm.

"Done, ma'am? he's done nothing, ma'am—he's no gentleman, I tell you, at all

"Explain yourself, Mrs. Clackit, what is the matter?"

"Let me light my candle," was the only answer of the widow,—flourishing about the unhappy dip, in a manner least likely to inflame anything but herself,—"Explain it!—how can I explain it, ma'am? come away with me and see."

"Indeed, Mrs. Clackit, I shall do no such thing; you strangely forget yourself," replied Nora; even her mild temper roused by the supposition that she could be induced to enter the chamber of a handsome gentleman, whose gentility, too, had suddenly become so very questionable.

"Not go, ma'am?" screamed Mrs. Clackit, in the suddenness of her agitation, lighting the sleeve of her dress instead of the wick of her candle.

"What! into the room of a gentleman, Mrs. Clackit."

"Not go, ma'am?" exclaimed Mrs. Clackit, "I thought you had more charity; I tell you the gentleman is no gentleman, but a beautiful young lady—and she, that is he—no, I ought to say—she has fallen down in a fit and struck her dear head,—I'm sure she'll bleed to death; if—O my poor Christmas gown! well, I declare, if there isn't a large hole burnt in it already!" No sooner did Nora's mind clearly gather from her companion's heterogeneous exclamation, that one of her own sex was near her, and in danger, than seizing a shawl from her neck, she quickly wrapped it round the smouldering arm of Mrs. Clackit, and directed her nimble footsteps to the room above;—though thus rapid in her movements, where real assistance could be rendered, she had not taken this step without contemplating the possibility of Mrs. Clackit being mistaken in her supposition as to the sex of the sufferer; but on this point she was mainly guided by her own impression. She had heard the stranger speaking to her landlady on the stairs; scarcely had the first silvery accent of that sad voice fallen on her ear, before it seemed to touch, by some electric power, the inmost chords of her heart. She had heard it—when?—how?—where?—under what circumstances had she first listened to the music of those melancholy tones?—In vain she racked remembrance,—but though utterly at fault here,—of this she never entertained a single doubt, that the voice was the voice of a female, and one which she had heard very lately; great, therefore, was her surprise, on hearing the assertion of Mrs. Clackit, that the speaker was a handsome gentleman—the subsequent information that the gentleman was no gentleman, but a beautiful lady, was, consequently, intelligence which her own mind corroborated; and in addition to the claims of her own sex, some strong presentiment told her that she was rushing to the assistance of a friend. On reaching the second floor back, the door stood open; at the opposite side of the room, the fire burnt brightly on the grateless hearth, where a pile of old pitchy wood, resting on the iron dogs, threw out a bright glare that made the grim fantastic shapes of the "haunted bed" doubly visible; by its side, on an old high-backed chair, in a night-dress, lay the insensible form of the new lodger. To lift the fainting girl upon the haunted bed was the act of an instant, while

Mrs. Clackit and another lodger rushed to her assistance, the former bearing—of course—a tumbler full of brandy and water. The exquisitely formed hand, the tiny foot, both white as the purest ivory, when first the skill of the carver reveals it to the light of day—the glowing shoulder—the long luxuriant masses of dark raven hair—all spoke too plainly the sex to which the sufferer belonged, even if the undress and the still more indubitable testimony of the seemingly lifeless bosom of the inanimate girl had been withheld. Rushing forward to her assistance with all a sister's solicitude, the surprise of Nora may be imagined, when she found herself supporting the beautiful form of Evelyn Merrion!

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## CHAPTER THE NINTH.

### INTRODUCES TWO NEW CHARACTERS.

How many bitter unavailing tears were shed over the fearful narrative of that night! When Evelyn first awoke, she could scarcely believe that it was indeed Nora who hung over her. Shame, horror, and delight, prevailed in her breast by turns; but it was long before she could prevail upon herself to dwell, even for an instant, on the frightful circumstances under which they had last parted; even when at length the story was disclosed, it was as much the imagination of Nora, as the afflicted tongue of Evelyn that told the tale, and painted the bitter alternative that was left her. Deeply and bitterly had the victim paused over it,—of too courageous a mind easily to entertain the idea of suicide,—of too high a pride to endure the observance of those familiar with her wrongs, recovery, though protracted and long doubtful, had slowly engendered in her bosom a sense of the bitterest revenge. Everything that bore the sign or mark of manhood, was to her distorted feelings but as the focus for every species of hatred that the deepest wrongs can excite.—After long deliberation as to the course she should pursue, she determined to fly the presence of those whose knowledge of her own injuries she felt to be so insupportable; and in the disguise of that sex, which had for ever blasted every hope of her own happiness, to seek in the world a refuge from her own ills, and the punishment of man, to whom they were attributable. After a long consultation, the friends determined, as might naturally have been expected, on mutually sharing their future fortunes; for a considerable time all Nora's efforts were requisite to induce Evelyn to bear this participation. But the sense of shame had worked so deeply into her proud heart, the mere presence of any one to watch her sufferings seemed insupportable; in proportion, however, as this feeling was evident on the one side, the entreaties on the other were renewed; till, at length, Evelyn promised Nora to accompany her to the house of Sir Job, on the condition that to no human being should the history of her past sorrows be revealed. With

this assurance, after many hours spent as we have described, the friends fell asleep.

Nora's first inquiry in the morning was for Sprat; and hearing that he was still absent, she no longer doubted that some accident must have befallen him; and grieved sincerely over his mishap, which, as he had spoken of the pressgang, she almost surmised. Herself and Evelyn set out in person, to inquire at the post-office for the expected letters from Sir Job.

All her intreaties had proved insufficient to prevail on Evelyn to lay aside her male apparel; having, therefore, to the best of their ability, bribed over Mrs. Clackit to permit the disguise in her house, a piece of most remarkable condescension, the two friends sallied forth.

It may easily be conceived how anxiously Nora waited some reply from her home; this was not only to seal her own misery or happiness, but to disclose whether by possibility any hopes yet remained of John Periwinkle ever being restored to his family; or whether they were to behold his murderer in Paul, and what the fate of that relative was to be. Alarmed by the falsehoods of Envee, she scarcely dared to anticipate his acquittal; and yet while she rejected every thought that presented itself of a different complexion, of one thing, at least, she felt perfectly confident, of the warmest welcome, namely, that Sir Job Periwinkle's warm heart could offer. Under these circumstances, her surprise and dismay can be easily conceived, when she received at the post-office, the letter she had but a few days before dispatched to Sir Job. Between conflicting emotions she was speechless; the first impression left on her mind was that she owed this kindness to Lady Periwinkle; but on referring to the letter, she saw that it was the hand of Sir Job himself, which had thus inflicted on her one of the severest pangs she had ever experienced; the real horrors of her situation now, for the first time, appeared in all their true force; without funds or any friends to supply their wants, in a large city where the virtues of all are regulated precisely by the quantity of gold each may possess, what prospect could be more utterly miserable, than that which now lay before them; as far as she had any opportunity of judging, her uncle must have taken offence at her non-appearance, and without investigating the cause, thus resented in the most abrupt, unreasonable, and unfeeling manner, a neglect for which she was as little accountable, or rather, was as much to be pitied as is the lunatic, whose errors are the result of dire calamity. Yet what resource remained open for her? It was clear her own family had shaken her off, and however hard to buffet the world, no other alternative remained; it was now that the blessing of Evelyn's companionship was reflected on her, who but a few minutes since seemed the least likely to benefit by their rencontre. It was now that the full repayment of her generous offer of protection was made to her.

Miss Merrion no sooner heard the story that her friend detailed, and beheld the difficulties gathering round her, than the lethargy of sorrow was at once dispelled by the pride of independence.

"Dry your tears, Nora," said the courageous girl. "O! would to heaven I had as little cause of grief." Nora replied not to the deep

agony of this exclamation, which seemed to come from the inmost soul of its utterer; but its effect was magical; it carried her mind back to the deepest wrong and heaviest affliction which human being can endure. What indeed were sorrows like her own beside it? Shame seemed to arrest the tear upon her cheek at the bare thought of a comparison, while through all that frowned in the back-ground, and lowered over her future existence, a long vista of hope and happiness opened as by the touch of an enchanter's wand; yet fortune did not press her the less heavily now than a few moments since, her destitution was not less, her resources greater, or her wants more circumscribed! Her infant would as surely clamour for food, and her landlady for rent, yet some irresistible conviction of the heart seemed to whisper over all a bright assurance of the future.

O blessed elasticity of the mind, over how many horrors hast thou not helped the unfortunate! Exquisite delusion! false in thyself, yet fastest friend of truth, without thy assistance how many have given up the bitter struggle in despair, and madly rushed on suicide when help was close at hand, and the briefest further endurance would have brought that happiness for which they had so long waited in vain!

"If anything on earth could have yielded me pleasure, Nora, it is this heartless conduct of your friends," said Miss Merrion; "don't let it distress you; we will now put in execution together, those plans for an independent support which I had formed before we met. I have a few guineas in my purse, and these will be sufficient to support us till some less exhaustible means of supply shall present itself. Do not let us, like the generality of fools, fling away that time in deploring which may be applied to remedying our evils; while you return to our lodgings I will at once go to the news-room, examine the papers, and see if nothing presents itself."

In accordance with this determined mode of treating their difficulties both the friends addressed themselves to their several duties. Day after day, however, did Evelyn return unsuccessful from her discouraging pursuit, and still, with a determination of purpose that was not to be beat down, gather from each defeat fresh hopes for the next effort. In the meanwhile, Nora's expectation had daily reached a lower and still lower state of despondency. As Evelyn returned from each day's fruitless inquiry, and neither a situation appeared for the applicants, nor any tidings could be obtained respecting Sprat's continued absence, the utter hopelessness of the future seemed to urge her forward to the last state of despair. At last, on the fifth day, Evelyn suddenly returned, and, full of the most extravagant joy, insisted that all their hopes were on the point of realisation. In the paper of the day she had seen an advertisement, requiring, in a family going to the West Indies, a governess for the children, and a secretary for the husband, and without further consideration had resolved that herself and friend could meet all the requisites demanded; nor was this all, a true touch of the Irish character had found its way into the calculation she had made, by the invention of the several parts that she and her friend were to sustain on this occasion.

Too glad only to get the opportunity of such a resource, Nora's fears

rather than any other feeling at once suggested the various disqualifications of herself and friend for the duties required; but Evelyn would hear of none of these.

"A secretary, my dear Evelyn? how do you think it possible you'll ever be able to maintain in a family the disguise you have assumed? and, who do you imagine will accept as a governess a young woman encumbered with a child?"

"Raise no difficulties," was the ready reply. "I have already prepared for every emergency; you have only to follow my plan, and we are armed at every point. I am your husband; that is my child; we have made an imprudent marriage, and, though we have seen better days, have nothing left for it but to go out to service, like other maids of all work. This will at once prevent any teasing suspicions of my sex, and be the surest safeguard of your own."

There was something at first so absurdly ridiculous in this proposition, that, despite of all her sorrows, Nora could not help receiving it with shouts of laughter; but it was so seriously maintained by Evelyn, and on reconsideration really seemed to offer so many undeniable advantages, that after a great deal of reluctance to practice such an imposition, Nora gave her consent to the masquerade, and saw her companion reply to the advertisement in the character agreed.

With this document Evelyn herself set off, and having left it at the hotel of the advertiser, received next morning a note, desiring the attendance of herself and wife. In much trepidation the new-married couple departed, and, thanks to their having stated that salary was no object, chanced upon a much better reception than they could have anticipated.

Having been ushered into one of the best sitting rooms in the house, they found two parties in possession,—a lady and gentleman; the former was seated at a table surrounded with papers, books, work-boxes, calico, scissors, and a multifarious collection of matters that might have belonged to a member of the society of universal knowledge, if, among the other cant of the day, such a society ever did exist.

By the side of the fire was sitting a poor thin little gentleman, as stinted in his proportions as the lady was exuberant in hers, and seemingly as wretched and miserable as any head of a family about to sail to the West Indies could reasonably be expected to prove. He held a book in his hand, and very attentively gazed past it at the fire. The lady certainly bore in her appearance the traces of former good looks, though there was nothing so alarmingly beautiful in either her countenance or figure, as to have induced even the strictest Joseph to take to flight. This however there was, in full perfection on her visage, a sufficient knowledge of her own importance, together with an equally firm persuasion as to the utter insignificance of every one else around her.

Having for some minutes in mute dignity surveyed, with a most scrutinising glance, from top to toe, the new candidates for her favour, she motioned them in silence to a chair, and thus began,—

"Do you know, young people, to whom it is you have ventured to offer yourselves in the important situations for which I understand you think yourselves qualified?"

"A family I believe, madam, going to the West Indies," gently replied Nora, on whose figure, as she put the question, the eye of the lady appeared to be resting. A dark frown instantly gathered on the brow of the querist, and combined with the most contemptible curl of the lip, to bespeak the wounded dignity which such an answer had called forth.

"A family going to the West Indies!" repeated the injured woman in the most contemptuous tones. "A family going to the West Indies!" She seemed almost unable to believe that any one, much less a dependent person, should venture thus to generalise a lady of her distinction. "A family going to the West Indies!" she might as well have called her "a woman" at once. Evelyn, more versed in the ways of the world than her unsuspicious friend, saw the rising storm, and quick at catching the foibles of character, hastened to deprecate the coming wrath.

"We have refrained from inquiring, madam, any particulars of your rank," said the ready Evelyn, with an assumed manner of the utmost deference, "for we feared whether such a step might be proper, till we were aware whether we might suit you."

"Quite correct, young man; very proper. I approve of your appearance; you seem to have some sense; who is this person?" pointing to the unhappy Nora, as if still in profound ignorance of that letter which but a few hours since she had read, and thus learnt all the particulars of the masquerade now played off upon her, except the material one of its deception. Smiling internally at this assumption of consequence, Evelyn replied, with a profound bow, "That, madam, is my wife." The lady looked at each of the parties still more narrowly than before; then affecting an air of forgetfulness, "Ah, true, so it is; some very imprudent marriage, I presume, young man?" and the lady thought with Mrs. Clackit,—a very handsome young man; but this for some reason or another, she did not then care to express.

"Imprudent marriage, ma'am," said Evelyn; "yes, rather," and both the culprits here hung down their heads with a simper of conscious imposition, that passed current for very natural bashfulness.

"I thought as much," returned the stout lady; "it's astonishing how many people wreck their happiness by these imprudent marriages. I did the same myself, and God knows how I have repented it."

This was pretty well!—and to say too in a man's presence, and her husband sitting close behind her all the time, to receive the full benefit of such an assertion; but no one can doubt that they were at least a most consistent pair; for neither did she turn round her head in doing him this little personal kindness, nor, on the other hand, did he think it worth his while to notice, by even the motion of a solitary eye-brow, so gratifying a mark of his wife's remembrance.

Both Evelyn and Nora, therefore, concluded that the studious gentleman, who so greatly admired the fire, was her brother or cousin, or

some other relative, duly licensed to enjoy these aspersions upon an absent spouse.

They were not, however, long left in ignorance as to the extreme degree of candour that marked the character of their new acquaintance.

"To return to what I was going to say," remarked the lady, "you are not aware who it is you are addressing." Now they were addressing nobody, and they needed but to have told this truth at once to have received their dismissal; fortunately, however, for their success, they contented themselves with a mute motion of the head. "I," resumed the lady, making a considerable pause after the personal pronoun,—"I—am—Mrs. Archdeacon Pontifex!—that is my husband (pointing her thumb over the shoulder, but without making the slightest effort to turn round or look at the man who was reading the fire.) "That is my husband—the archdeacon. Of course you have heard of Archdeacon Pontifex, the first scholar in Europe."

"Frequently, madam," replied the ready but audacious Evelyn, with a low bow, while the simple Nora looked at her in the most unutterable amazement.

"Of course you had," resumed Mrs. Pontifex.

"O yes, ma'am, of course; and very great delight I've received from perusing his translation"—of the classic languages, Evelyn was about to add—but her good genius, in the shape of Mrs. Pontifex, interrupted her with the words "Chaldaic, Hebrew, Mahrattan, Javanese, Maltese, Arabic, Coptic and ancient Phenician. O, of course, every one has been delighted with Mr. Archdeacon's translations of these languages; and though a woman ought to pretend ignorance on these learned matters, still, between ourselves, how can I help knowing something about them, after being married for these last twenty years to the first scholar in Europe?"

Now there are people in the world who may imagine, that after this tribute to his worth, the first scholar in Europe should have got up and returned thanks, or at least made his bow; he certainly ought to have fidgeted on his chair, and felt nervous and bashful; or if he could have done nothing else, he surely might have blushed a little on this very interesting occasion;—but no, there sat the first scholar in Europe, the man who had translated all these delightful, but most unnameable languages, which were so exquisite to translate but so impossible to read; and there he seemed likely to sit, till his friends had finished the reading of them, before he gave any sign that these open praises produced the least effect on his nervous system.

"He's a very extraordinary man, ma'am," said the mischievous Evelyn, and she thought it, too.

"O very," replied Mrs. Archdeacon Pontifex, "if he hadn't been that, *I* should never have had him; but still, of course, it's a sad thing, young man, to marry a beggar without a penny as, doubtless, you know; therefore you musn't be led away by any seeming advantages of a woman's passing her life in the society of the first scholar in Europe."

"No, ma'am, certainly not," replied Evelyn, who could not help

smiling at the admirable society which the first scholar in Europe was likely to prove, if he always made himself as agreeable as he had done, since her first sight of him that morning.

"As far as regards a woman, sir, you're right," resumed Mrs. Archdeacon, "but let me tell you, the advantages of the Archdeacon's society to a young person *in your situation*, are really inestimable, really inestimable."

At this climax of the farce, Nora feared that all her efforts would be unable to restrain her from downright laughter. It was only by reflecting on all the horrors of her position, that she was enabled to maintain her gravity, while that of Evelyn was somewhat similarly endangered.

"If you should ever think, young man, of going into the church as a preacher," continued Mrs. Pontifex, "I'm sure the example of my husband's eloquence will be of unspeakable utility to you;" but the utilitarian was as little moved as the first scholar in Europe—there he sat still gazing into the fire, to all appearance perfectly indifferent whether his wife talked flattery, defamation, sense, nonsense, or aught beside.

To look at Evelyn's face, one would scarcely imagine she was the same being, who a few minute's since, had entered the room, bearing all the traces of hopeless anguish; so completely did she seem to enter into the humour of the scene around her, wearing at the same time, an aspect of deep deference towards Mrs. Archdeacon, which only made the matter tenfold more ridiculous. Having mutely bowed to the last proposition, made by the dignified lady—the latter, who seemed well inclined to that species of conversation, which was all on one side, proceeded to put a few questions, which did look something like the business of the meeting.

"Now then, young gentleman, as you propose to be Mr. Archdeacon's secretary, oblige me by stating what you can do."

"Anything, ma'am," modestly replied Evelyn, determined not to give a lukewarm description of herself.

"Anything!" repeated Mrs. Pontifex, "that's highly satisfactory; and as salary is not your object, I think you may consider yourself engaged."

"Thank you, madam, I'm much obliged to you, and my wife——" but as this was a delicate subject, Evelyn seemed hardly able to grapple with it, and at this first word stopped short; perhaps she fancied that Mrs. Archdeacon would come to her assistance;—there she was mistaken, that lady remained quietly staring in her face, and showed as little inclination to advert to Evelyn's better-half, as she did to her own. As for Nora, this was in reality her first entrance into the world, and everything that she saw, she very innocently set down to be part of the usual custom practised on such occasions; thus when she beheld an exemplary wife engaging the husband's secretary, she naturally concluded, that the exemplary husband would, in his turn, repay such attention, by engaging the wife's governess. With considerable trepidation, therefore, she began to prepare for her expected examination, by the first scholar in Europe. What should she say to him? she cer-

tainly knew how to sew—could teach a child its first rudiments, and cut out baby-linen—all matters, no doubt, highly interesting to a man given to translate the Phœnician dialect; thus primed, therefore, she was less taken aback than might naturally be supposed, when she observed Mr. Archdeacon turn about with an evident intention to articulate. At last, the great man spoke. That eloquence, the example of which was to have been so useful to her husband in the church, and formed the delightful company of Mrs. Archdeacon, at last condescended to illumine the humble sphere of private life, in the following apposite question to his wife.

"Is it true that the vacant bishopric is to be given to Doctor Paunchey, for his treatise on the Greek particle?"

It was a touching question—and dark must have been the indifference of the soul that could hear it undisturbed. As a dead silence reigned in the room at the moment of putting it, no one could possibly mistake its dread significance; the effect that it produced upon the soul of Mrs. Archdeacon, the woman who had such a reverence for the first scholar in Europe, became instantly apparent. Turning to the new secretary, she quietly demanded—

"Can you drive a pair of horses well in harness?"

"O certainly, madam, I've long had considerable experience in driving," was the ready reply of Evelyn.

"Very good," resumed Mrs. Pontifex, "and can you set words to music?"

"I have done so once or twice, but not often."

"Have you any voice for singing?"

"A little, Mrs. Archdeacon."

"I hope you have no children."

"Only one at present, Mrs. Archdeacon."

"Ah! true, so your letter said; but it's very young, isn't it?"

"Very young, quite an infant."

"Very good—then you will remember, for the future, that I don't approve of any children in my family, except my own."

"Very well, Mrs. Archdeacon," modestly replied Evelyn, who seemed determined that no charge either of disobedience or informality should at least be brought against her, on any score whatever.

"I hope you understand the management of male servants."

"O perfectly, ma'am."

"Very well then, I think you may consider yourself as my husband's secretary. As for your wife, of course, in such a case, she will be my governess; and it will be for you to instruct her in the discharge of any duties which I may commit to her care. I don't know that there is anything else that I need mention to you, except that we embark the day after to-morrow; and as the voyage will be of some weeks' continuance, you will, of course, take care to be provided with everything necessary to make a proper appearance, as part of my suite. You may go now—give me your address. I will communicate to you to-morrow relative to the embarkation in the ship that is to convey us."

"Perhaps, ma'am, you are not aware," timidly said Nora, and thinking in the simplicity of her heart, that she was doing a very kind and proper thing, "perhaps you are not aware that your husband spoke to you just now relative to some bishopric."

Looking at Nora with an expression as much as to say, "I perfectly understand and hear everything around me," Mrs. Archdeacon replied, addressing herself to Evelyn, "before you go, perhaps it may be as well to remark, that your double salary, besides your table and board, will be nineteen pounds a year; 'tis true, this is rather high for the slight services that may be required of you; but knowing the antipathy some people have to a foreign climate, I have prevailed upon Mr. Archdeacon to exceed the sum usually paid to your class." With a gracious bow to Evelyn, and a look of the most perfect unconsciousness to his supposed wife, Mrs. Archdeacon Pontifex rang the bell, and our friends retired.

It was not till they gained the street that either of them would trust themselves to speak of the scene they had just witnessed. When, at length, they were safely beyond all observance, Nora, looking very simply at her friend, observed—

"Surely, those people are rather singular in their manners."

"Singular," rejoined Evelyn,—"I was just wondering out of what madhouse that woman could possibly have escaped."

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## CHAPTER THE TENTH.

### CONTAINS THE PONTIFICAL EMBARKATION.

The afternoon was considerably advanced when our friends left the very intelligent presence of Mrs. Archdeacon Pontifex; and long and serious was the debate which ensued between them, as to the eligibility of accepting her very liberal offers. Nora was decidedly favourable to the undertaking, onerous as it certainly was, but this very acquiescence on her part only made Evelyn pause the more, since it showed her how little acquainted with the world her friend really was, and how slight the dependence consequently to be placed in her judgment. That they should both have to go through no slight share of petty annoyances in the family of such an empty-headed woman she saw at a glance—on the other hand she was equally ready at discovering that Nora, from her very ignorance of the world, would never feel one fiftieth part of those shafts which the low malignity of the other seemed inclined to aim at her, and from no possible reason, so far as Evelyn could discern, unless it were that most contemptible of all—the pleasure of putting a slight upon one of her own sex who happened to be young and beautiful. Still, let the motive be what it might, it was evident that it existed in no inconsiderable degree; and it was lucky, therefore, that the party against whom it was aimed, was too simple and kind-hearted to detect it. Up to the very hour of embark-

ation, no effort was spared by Evelyn to discover, if possible, some less disagreeable resource for the extremities of herself and friend; but in this matter fate seemed inexorable—no other opportunity of achieving their independence proffered itself to our friends. The morning of embarkation arrived, they repaired with their humble luggage to the hotel of Mrs. Archdeacon, and forming part of the party for embarkation, thus set off together. Since the first auspicious day, when Nora had been introduced to Mrs. Pontifex, there were two points on which she felt great gratitude to that most dignified woman. The first was—unlike the generality of married ladies—for the singular affection which Mrs. Archdeacon had been pleased to bestow upon her liege spouse Evelyn. Day by day she had informed him of the utter impossibility which her husband felt in proceeding with the numerous and important avocations which at present occupied him, without the assistance of his secretary. Day after day Evelyn attended, while the sailing of the vessel was put off as various causes of delay arose; and the first scholar in Europe seemed perfectly content to circumscribe the sphere of his secretary's usefulness to watching him, the Archdeacon, as he sat for hours looking into the fire, while his wife proceeded with her usual string of grave nonentities.

Evelyn certainly did write one note to Mrs. Archdeacon's washerwoman respecting the delay of certain household matters, and the breach thus made in the said washerwoman's word; but no more important use of her literary powers having been ventured on, Evelyn began to gain more courage in her calling, as secretary to the first scholar in Europe, than even she had been bold enough to hope for at starting. Her chief duties, she now found, were to give her arm to Mrs. Archdeacon in her walks, drive her pony tilbury, and listen to the exquisite conversation in which that woman of many opportunities abounded. The great delights of such intellectual discourse will be readily understood, when we say, in one word, that it always related to herself. Of this, a very slight sample will perhaps be sufficient; and we may take at random that which passed between them on the interesting event of their departure from the shores of merry England.

The morning was beautifully fine and cloudless, and might have stood for a mutual compromise between the rival seasons of the year. With the date of winter and the freshness of spring, the morning boasted all the brightness of summer, and the mild bracing air of autumn. The few remaining household goods of our little party had been sent on board, under the charge of the servants. Mrs. Archdeacon led the way, leaning on the arm of her husband's secretary, closely followed by the first scholar in Europe, who supported Nora under all the boisterous delights of his usual hilarious company. This, between the ship and the hotel, did actually, on the memorable occasion in question, attain the extent of saying "A very fine day this, Miss,—that is—I beg your pardon—Madam."

"Very fine, sir," replied Nora, whose thoughts, totally engrossed by the melancholy circumstances under which she was bidding adieu to her native country, perhaps for ever, seemed about as conscious of the Archdeacon's gallantry, as he himself was astonished at it. Meanwhile his

wife, who unfortunately had heard this sally, turned round, and bestowed on the guilty pair a look of virtuous indignation that would have annihilated any mortals of ordinary texture. Seeing, however, that her thunderbolts seemed to fall on charmed ground, she turned once more to her companion, and resumed the conversation that had been temporarily interrupted.

"As I was saying, Mr. Marsden," (for such was the name that Evelyn had assumed,) "the first time I left England after my marriage with Mr. Archdeacon, was under circumstances of peculiar feeling. Seventeen offers had I refused, Mr. Marsden, in the preceding twelvemonth—I was then in the first bud of beauty—I need not tell you what was my appearance at seventeen—I need only say that I was perhaps one of the most beautiful and accomplished creatures that can be conceived; it is enough to record that the whole aristocracy of England were at my feet, Mr. Marsden; yet, strange infatuation of girlhood! I refused them all to fling myself away upon a beggar—to be sure he's the first scholar in Europe; but, after all, that's but a poor consolation to a woman who might have commanded anything; but such is always the fate of the young and beautiful. Now do tell me, what were the circumstances of your marriage? how came you to marry such a poor-looking simpleton? confess now, candidly, were you not taken in? As for me, I declare to you, upon my word, I couldn't even enjoy a common dance at a ball without my partners coming to me next morning with an offer—you can't conceive how particularly disagreeable it is to be for ever refusing people in these little matters—so at last when I saw any of them approaching me for this purpose, I used to shorten the formalities most wonderfully."

"Did you, indeed, madam? pray how did you achieve that? perhaps you will be kind enough to enlighten me on that interesting point?"

"Oh certainly! 'Now hold your tongue,' I used to exclaim, putting up my hand, 'I know what you are going to say, you needn't speak—I know exactly what you are going to tell me—spare yourself the mortification, my good sir, I can't have you; I admire you as a friend, but I can't possibly accept you as anything more.'"

"Well then, madam, at this——."

"At this,—of course;" but what followed of course was, very fortunately for the hearer, never brought to speech. At that instant they arrived at the quay, and all the servants crowded forward to render their assistance to Mrs. Archdeacon Pontifex. On all these occasions, the first scholar in Europe was as little considered as the last; and whether he got into the boat head or tail forwards, or any other manner, seemed to be matter of equal moment. His humble wife was, however, contented to lean upon the arm of her husband's secretary, which she did, by the bye, pretty heavily; and as she thus descended the steps to the boat, she whispered in Evelyn's ears, with what was intended to be a most insinuating glance, "There, Mr. Edward, I mustn't indulge you with any more chit-chat for the next two hours, for I declare your wife is looking quite jealous at me." Often in after days, when real or fancied sorrows were pressing on our friends, did this speech, so typical of the folly of its utterer,

bring mirth by its repetition to the hearts of those who had such reason to be tickled by its absurdity, while, from the specimen now given of Mrs. Archdeacon's balderdash, it may fairly be supposed that Evelyn's salary was fully earned in its endurance. Within half an hour, our friends had embarked on board the spacious trader, in which they fondly hoped to reach Barbadoes, her ample canvas been given to the wind, and the port of Liverpool left rapidly fading in the distance to leeward.

As the sea was as calm and gentle as the day was fine, our fair friends were enabled, for a much longer space than they had anticipated, to enjoy the delight of bidding a gradual adieu to the shores of England. With minds far differently constituted from that of the weak woman who had just gone below to inspect the various arrangements in her cabin; it may readily be imagined how solemn were their feelings at this important moment—whether they might ever again return to a country endeared to them by a thousand ties, nay, almost hallowed even by the sufferings which each had there undergone; whether their voluntary departure was to prove a matter of grief or rejoicing, were all questions of vital moment, which nothing but the irremediable experience of the future could answer. At last, nothing but a low faint line of haze upon the distant sea was left to them of home. To Evelyn this spoke chiefly of a release from further chance of meeting those, the very sight of whom would but redouble her distress; but to Nora, the sense of irremediable banishment from all her family, every being to whom she felt attached, every soul who could render her any assistance in those hours of sorrow and dependence which visit, in their turn, alike the haughty and the low—these feelings, and the still recurring question, whether she had taken the wisest and the most proper step, without making one last appeal to her family by seeing them—afforded her the deepest anguish, which every additional furlong of distance from the receding land seemed to render more and more insupportable. Two thoughts alone in this trying moment afforded that consolation of which she stood so greatly in need—the unmerited desertion of her family who should have proved her firmest supporters, and the thorough conviction that the father of her child no longer survived to be affected in his worldly fortunes, either by her sorrows or humiliation.

To both then of the friends, the message of Mrs. Pontifex, calling them to some new duties below, was rather a relief than a vexation, since it expedited that adieu to their native land, which both desired and both seemed loth to give. The tears sprang unbidden to their eyes as they lingered for the last moment on the dusky outline of Old England; and mutually clasping each other's hands, they thus silently interchanged fresh vows of love and fellowship, as they voluntarily resigned, with their forsaken country, every other affection and support.

## CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

### EXHIBITS THE PLEASURES OF A PRIVATEER'S ACQUAINTANCE.

"How does she bear now, Jackson?" cried the captain, as he sat on the weather hammock netting, conning his ship with all the intense excitement and apprehension which a seaman involuntarily feels when the fortunes of war are about to wrest from his grasp, not only the object of his command, but the dearly-prized result of a life of labour, which over fondness for his profession has induced him to hazard in that dangerous investment of capital, a merchant-ship.

"She bears pretty much the same, sir, as she did a little time ago, perhaps half a point or so more away upon the lee-quarter," answered the mate, looking at the compass.

"Not more, do you think?" again inquired the captain; "then we *are* creeping to windward of him at last."

"Yes, sir, we are weathering upon him slightly; but what we gain in the weather-gage, we lose I fear, in the run. He's nearly a mile closer to us now than he was at the setting of the watch."

"So I fear too. But what the devil's to be done? do you think she'll bear any more sail?"

"No, sir, I don't think it'll be much use trying that on. It's blowing a stiff double-reef-topsail breeze now, and here are we without a single reef in low or aloft!—and top-gallant sails, and large jib set."

"Why ay, I think the old girl's got as much as she can stagger under."

"Ay, sir, that has she. Just look aloft at that main-top-mast, it's whipping like a fly rod with a halibut to it; there's not a stick in her that's not complaining. If I warn't to be uncommon nice in steering, you would soon have a spar or two overboard."

"Well, then, I suppose we must make up our minds to a French prison, and a little bit of beggary. I knew how it would be when that old devil, Mrs. Archdeacon, or what the blazes she calls herself, flung the steerage cat overboard for going to sleep on her satin tucker; I knew precious well some kettle of fish was brewing for us."

"Ay, ay, sir," growled the mate in sweet reply, as the captain, who had now come down to his side, shook the compass-box by which he was steering: "I never knew a ship yet, with a heap of women on board, that got to her journey's end without some sort of disaster."

"Right, Jackson, right; for my part, I had rather load a ship with sugar to Barbadoes—'tis nearly as sweet, for the matter of that, and not half so likely to be shifting in a gale of wind."

"No, sir, it is not; you may catch the sea in a calm now and then, by accident; but if ever a woman's out of mischief, why I know nothing about it." As the mate came to this very logical conclusion, he added

something about his eyes; but as this was of a very ophthalmic tendency, we forbear the introduction of any thing so contagious.

"Well, Jackson," said the captain after a deep sigh, and a pause, as he examined the chasing vessel with a spy-glass, "I suppose there's no doubt of it's being our old friend."

"I knew him at once by the rake of his masts, and that infarnal jib."

"Yes, I suppose its Johnny Crapo again; he's picked up four or five birds out of the covey already, and it seems as if he's made his mind up now to have us for the next. What's the use of talking about a British convoy, when here, out of seventy or eighty ships as we sailed in company with from the Cove of Cork, with three frigates to protect us, there's well nigh a dozen of us gone already? I'm sure they can't say that we didn't sail as fast for them as any reasonable body could look for, in a ship loaded with merchandise; but as for them captains of a man-of-war, a man might as well go and sup with an old crocodile, as think to turn them round to any useful kind of purpose; whatever they please, they'll do. No sooner do they get a convoy in the open sea, and out of the admiral's sight, than it's march ahead the best of you, and the devil take the hindmost." As the captain consoled himself with muttering these complaints, pacing all the while up and down the deck, and stealing, ever and anon, uneasy glances at the ship pursuing them, the privateer in chase crowded sail after sail, and lost no opportunity, suggested by the long experience of those on board, to come up with the Prosperity — for such was the presuming name borne by the merchant vessel now so hardly pressed.

How, in the first place, men can possess the taste to select names that bear on their very front a general defiance to all ill-luck, we know not; for us it would have been quite sufficient to hear of such a name, at once to give the most decided avoidance to anything bearing it; not from any feeling of superstition, but simply from that tendency which we hourly mark, in the chances of life, to run quite contrary to all our calculations. It may easily be imagined, that when so imminent a danger as captivity was thus threatening all on board, neither crew nor passengers were particularly disposed to sleep. On the latter, however, was inflicted a double penalty—that of remaining awake in the most intense suspense, and yet being wholly debarred from watching the advance of the pursuer that caused it. With many ships, the trim of the vessel is such, that they sail considerably faster with all their crew disposed of in their hammocks, than walking about at random on the deck. Prosperity was one of these capricious-minded craft; and in order to please her humours, the whole of the passengers were requested to keep their cots, and interdicted from appearing on deck. One elderly gentleman alone had managed to propitiate the captain so far as to be tacitly allowed to remain and speculate on the gradually approaching chances of his bondage. The night was as cloudless as if the impatient prayers of some desiring lover had obtained, for the delight of himself and mistress, a night which no ordinary expectation at such a time of year could anticipate.

The wind was blowing freshly from the north-west. Not a cloud was to be seen over the whole expanse of the heavens, whose divine

azure came beautifully forth beneath the crescent glimmer of a new moon. The ship had got so far from land, that the sea already bore that deep blue tint which generally speaks a depth of the greatest intensity. The night breeze swept freshly over it in a strong continued blast, curling the crest of each wave as it poured along and filled the troughs of the purple seas, with showers of brilliant spray, to which the reflection of innumerable stars combined to give the semblance of a profusion of jewels, scattered at random by the lavish hand of nature on the dazzling bosom of her favourite child. In vain the eye sought round the sublime circle of the horizon for any object on which to rest connected with the little tyrant man, or human sympathy. Not a ship—not a sail was to be descried. Solitary as the dark waters rose and fell upon the first hour of the creation, so did they appear unceasingly to roll their mighty flood in lonely grandeur at this moment. On board the merchant vessel all seemed still and hushed as on the vast waste without. Occasionally a slight sound was heard as the steerage wheel was moved. A low complaining of the overstrained masts struck nervously on the apprehensive ear, as one sea, more heavy than the rest, rolled forward its bulk of waters on the struggling ship, and for a moment arrested its career Beside these sounds, all was still, save the plaintive sighing of the night breeze through the rigging, and the measured and melancholy cadence of the waters, as each wave cleft by the massive bow, culminated along her sides, and finally mingled with the tormented waters in her rear. Silently, and with a troubled countenance, her captain, and part owner, gazed on the scene without; and from the beautiful and solemn expanse that lay before him, so winning to a seaman's eye, turned sullenly, and with all the traces of the darkest hatred, to that white speck on his lee quarter, where ruin threatened in the fairest guise.

"One would little think," muttered the agitated seaman, "of a craft that looks so trim and ship-shape as that privateer, yonder, that the wreck of a man's whole life and fortune, as it may be, is all she seeks for." As he said this he came to a deep pause. Other and still stronger emotions seemed to succeed within his mind, and hastily brushing his hand across his eyelids, he muttered, "'Tis no use thinking of it—if it must be, it must be—tho' it will go hard with her and the little ones before I get back again, I'm thinking." Where were his thoughts wandering?

In a quiet little residence, not far from the port he had last quitted, resided a wife, and two young children; and at this moment, when his own freedom was hanging upon the balance of a hair, we may suppose his thoughts naturally reverted to those so dear to him. By the opening of the gangway, stood the solitary passenger, in whose mind were passing reflections, somewhat dissimilar to those of the captain, but little less unpleasing. The mate, as he stood at the wheel, looked back hurriedly at the approaching foe, as if he also thought of those whom his labours supported, and to whom his freedom was as necessary as the very bread of life.

In the course of an extensive war, so vast as that into which this

nation was then entering, in how many thousands of instances, by others upon our own countrymen, and still more frequently by our own countrymen upon others, were wrongs infinitely greater than these inflicted!

Now, when the lapse of years has cooled our madness, and the enjoyment of victory has demonstrated its worthlessness, what is the amount of the advantage we have gained for all the misery, agony, and woe, inflicted and endured? The advantages of struggling and starving beneath the pressure of an insoluble debt! Surely, if a few miserable wretches, led by a mistaken political zeal to change some form of government, at the cost of a few lives, are guilty of treason—what language can paint the crimes of that minister, who, for the indulgence of guilty ambition, plunges whole nations into war? A traitor to humanity, a wholesale assassin, a rebel to all the holy influences which should sanctify the human heart—these are all terms still too weak to express the enormity of his guilt.

While the two ships were thus staggering under the weight of their respective sails, and each eye on board the Prosperity was anxiously watching how the spars bore the strain of the increasing breeze—a sudden flash illumined the whole extent of sea and sky, and the captain, rapidly turning towards the chasing privateer, saw a streak of foam advancing from her bow, towards his own vessel, with that swift but irregular dotting line which bespeaks the passage of a shot along the water.

"Here it comes at last, sir," cried the mate.

"I see it," replied the captain, "it won't come home, though, will it?"

"No, sir, I think not; it's rather a far-off shot that, even for a long gun." Just as the mate gave this flattering opinion, a deep heavy booming sound, slowly struggling up to windward, confirmed their belief, as to the nature of the light. And lest any teasing doubts should remain upon the minds of any on board, respecting the abilities of the gunner who fired it, the report in question was instantaneously followed by a crash, which, to all appearance, could only have been made by the destruction of every piece of crockery in the cabin below. Nor was this all; nearly simultaneous with the inanimate exclamations of the crockery, was heard the far more life-like outcry of some lady in deep distress.

"Has that shot hit any one below, Jackson?" demanded the captain.

"Only my wife, Captain Simpson," replied a deep grave voice from the other side of the quarter-deck, taking the reply out of the mouth of the mate. The captain looked round in mute surprise; the voice had proceeded from the solitary passenger, and the solitary passenger was —of course—Archdeacon Pontifex.

"Only your wife, sir?" repeated the captain.

"Only my wife, sir," reiterated the Archdeacon.

"But hadn't you better go down, sir, and see if she's not hurt?"

"O no, I'm sure she's not hurt."

"Good Heavens, Mr. Archdeacon! how do you know?"

"Very well, sir; nothing ever hurts my wife—at least, I've known

her for twenty years, and nothing ever hurt her yet." The Archdeacon sighed deeply as he came to these words; but as he rendered no explanation of his sighing, it would be wrong in us to put any forced construction upon what, after all, the utterer might have felt to be merely a desirable and pleasant mode of exercising his lungs.

"Jackson, step down and see how the lady is after that," said the captain, turning to the mate; "if a four-and-twenty pound shot doesn't hurt her—no wonder she thinks nothing of flinging a cat overboard now and then—a leddy of that sort of build, might defy even the Flying Dutchman himself. I don't like having such passengers aboard, for my part—do just step down and see what the racket is"—as the screams not only increased in potency, but seemed to draw nearer and nearer to the quarter-deck. With a view of ascertaining the truth of this matter, the captain advanced to the helm; and Jackson was upon the point of relinquishing it into his hand, when all further trouble was saved, by the appearance, upon deck, of the lady in question herself. She was very hastily clad, it is true; but the haste in her dress was as nothing, when compared with the haste of her expressions.

"Captain Simpson, what is the meaning of this noise?—Mr. Archdeacon, have you no explanation to offer me? I say, is this your promised attention to me? Do you intend me to be killed, or murdered, or what, that you allow this abominable annoyance to be perpetrated in my very ears? What is the meaning of it all? Is this the way that you conduct your ship, that you allow your seamen to stamp upon the deck, till they break all the china in the cabin, and frighten me to death?"

"Stamp upon the deck, ma'am?" said the captain, "there's no one been stamping on the deck that I know of. That row that you heard below, is nobody stamping, it's the enemy's shot. I can't help it—'tisn't my fault, ma'am, if iron balls will go through oak timbers."

"The enemy's shot, Captain Simpson? Oak timbers? Mr. Archdeacon. Do you mean to say that any enemy can have dared —— ?" At this ill-timed moment, when the full sense of her danger seemed, for the first time, illuminating the mind of Mrs. Archdeacon, and she, at last, heard a proposal from the vassal man, which she could neither understand nor refuse, a second flash sent its mimic lightning over the vast expanse around; and the ball, traversing as swiftly and surely as before, struck the unprosperous Prosperity full in the lee bulwark, just above the quarter-deck, where Mrs. Archdeacon was standing, and about to put the question whether any one could dare, &c. They are a very daring race, those cannon-balls, and many people have had reason to complain of the exceeding familiarity with which they strike up an acquaintance without the slightest previous grounds. On the moment, the flash was seen—

"Stand clear," cried the captain and the mate, with one voice.

"Where? where?" screamed in reply the agonised Archdeaconess, in all the panic of futile apprehension. While she was yet skipping about on the quarter-deck, in a manner not wholly calculated to sustain the dignity to which she was so much attached, the unceremonious

shot rushed through the opening it had made, crashing the wood in all directions, and covering Mrs. Pontifex in a shower of splinters.

"Stop them, stop them, Captain Simpson; put me on shore, I say, directly, Mr. Archdeacon," roared the unhappy Mrs. Pontifex, appealing, by turns, to those whom she seemed to suspect of possessing some most unheard-of powers, and not very clearly perceiving that neither one nor the other of her orders were of a nature to be very easily obeyed.

"Stop them, ma'am?" said the bluff captain, pitying her distress, yet unable to restrain a smile at the ridiculous form it took. "It's death by the law, ma'am, to stop a cannon-shot by the way, I can assure you."

"Put you on shore, my dear?" gravely remarked the Archdeacon, with the same precision with which he could have scanned a quantity, or composed a sapphic, "I believe we are even out of sight of land, are we not, Captain Simpson?"

"I should think we ought to be," replied the captain, regarding with infinite contempt a being who could ask such a question, when they had been for the last week obliged to take their observation of the sun daily, before his eyes, in order to gain the latitude. While yet, however, Mrs. Archdeacon was still dancing about the quarter-deck, the horizon was again lit up with the fire of the enemy—again the shot came booming along the purple surface of the deep—and, again striking the ship's side, again covered Mrs. Archdeacon with the harmless splinters it threw out.

"Will nobody assist me, will nobody come to my relief? Will you all stand by and see me shot at in this way?"

"Bless you, ma'am, they an't firing at you," said the captain; "why don't you go below out of the way?" But in this the captain and the lady differed materially—the captain imagined the privateer was firing at his ship, while the lady, in full accordance with her favourite theme, entertained the most perfect conviction that every shot was aimed at her particular existence, and nothing else.

"Where is your secretary, sir?" at last said she; "if *he* were here, I should find some one to protect me."

"I'll send him up to you, my dear," philosophically replied the Archdeacon, quietly descending the companion,—"Good morning, Captain Simpson, it strikes me I shall be safer in my berth below."

"To be sure you will, sir," roared the captain, getting into a rage; "why the devil don't you take your wife down with you, instead of leaving her here to be cut to atoms?"

"Sir, you mistake very gravely," replied the Archdeacon, just before his head disappeared below,—"I never interfere with Mrs. Pontifex's arrangements."

"Well, if that isn't damned cool," said the captain,—"I don't know much about it. Jackson, that's a good fellow, do hand that lady below, and we'll batten down the hatches." In swift obedience to this command, the sturdy arm of Jackson was thrown round the waist of Mrs. Pontifex; and in spite of all her protestations, her dignity was consigned to a place of greater safety, and the Prosperity left with-

out her valuable aid, to make the best fight she could against the privateer.

"Now, Jackson, my boy, as we've got the decks clear at last, let's see if we can't manage, by some lucky shot, to knock away a spar of that craft astern; send half-a-dozen hands here to cast loose that aftermost gun—and let the second mate go below to douse the lights, and open the magazine. Have you seen that all the cutlasses are ready?"

"Ay, sir, every one of them: not that they'll be of much sort of use; for if it once comes to boarding with a privateer, it isn't difficult to see who'll have the best of it. Stand clear, sir, here comes another shot—they're good gunners aboard that little craft."

"No mistake about that, Jackson," as the captain saw the shot pass clean through the main topsail. "Come, bear a hand, my boys—load away—this can't last long, unless we put some sort of a stopper on that fellow's impudence. Ah! here comes the powder—now, my lads, in with the cartridge."

"All home, sir," cried the ready seamen.

"Here's the shot, then," returned the captain, handing the six-pound ball, to an old man-of-war's-man, who, after many wounds, had entered the merchant service.

"Lord love you, captain, this looks like a mere doctor's bolus, after being used to handle the two-and-thirties in his Majesty's service."

"I only wish, Spanker, it was a bolus down the throat of that cursed privateer; however, pass it home—stand aside, and let me have one fair shot at him."

In obedience to the captain's command, the seaman, after he had passed home the last shot, drew back; and the captain, stooping carefully down, took a deliberate aim along the barrel of the little brass piece of ordnance; taking advantage of a weather-roll, after he had taken his aim, the captain fired.

With eager expectation the crew looked round, to see, if possible, where the shot struck; but whether it was the fact of the privateer herself firing at the same moment, or whether the shot had really gone astray, this at least was evident—not the slightest effect could be discovered on either the hull or sails of their pursuer.

"Come, my lads, look about you, sponge and load again—if the first doesn't tell, the second may."

"The fires are all out below, sir," reported Jackson.

"That's right, my boy, there's another gun for you on the weather side of the deck; bring it over to leeward—blaze away as hard as you can. If we do nothing else, the firing may, at least, bring down some sloop-of-war to our assistance; they are sharp enough, where prize-money's concerned; though, as for the commerce of the country, I suppose the underwriters may look out for that." Gun after gun was now loaded and fired by the captain and his little crew, but no visible results could be traced from any of them; till at last, tired with aiming at a mark seemingly so inaccessible, the captain resigned his post to the old man-of-war's-man, saying, "There, my boy, you know what it is to ply these tools in earnest. Try what you can do for a space. Sam,"

addressing one of the ship's boys, "run up to the main-topmast head, with that glass that now lies on the capstan, sweep round the horizon, and see if your sharp young eyes can't make out something like a friendly sail. Jackson, how do you get on with your gun? It's slow work, this fighting privateers at long balls with such pop-guns as these."

"Ay, that it is, sir; the devil a bit of harm I can see that we have done with'em. Do you make out any spars or rigging carried away, sir?"

"Not a stick of it, Jackson, nor even a shot-hole through her canvas—there it is, smooth, and as white, and as stiff, as a board—she's a weatherly little craft that."

"She'd be much nicer, sir," growled the mate, firing his gun, "at a longer distance—Did you see that shot strike, sir?"

"The devil a strike, Jackson."

"Well, I did think for once, that that was into her; but there's no heart in using these little brazen bits of pop-guns—they're only fit to give pills to old women with."

"Wait a minute, your honour," chimed in the old man-of-war's-man, "it's now my turn to have a shy. Will you just keep your eye, Captain Simpson, upon that rakish craft, while I fire my gun?"

"Ay, ay, Spanker—now then for it; I've got her right in the field of my glass—bear a hand, and slap it into her."

"Avast heaving, your honour; a slow shot for a sure one, all the world over." And leisurely stroking his left hand down his long plaited pig-tail behind him, and laying himself nearly at length along the deck, the old tar squinted down the tube of the gun, with a cool determined manner that bespoke the veteran—"How many shot did you put in, Bill?"

"Stand clear," cried two or three voices,—"here comes another twentyfour-pounder from the enemy." Whiz came the rushing shot—crash went the timbers, scattering the splinters once more in all directions. A short brief cry of agony was heard; and Bill, with his answer yet unformed upon his lips, and his hand, still warm, upon Spanker's shoulder, was laid a mutilated corpse upon the deck. The man-of-war's-man gave a side glance at his shipmate, without turning his head, or even moving a muscle—drew his hand across his face, to clear the dead man's blood from his visage—and then briefly muttering the words, "Poor bo', is that you?" ejected a long stream of tobacco-coloured fluid, and then, as if to himself, continued—"Well, he couldn't have put in more than three shot, I suppose—never mind, Bill, for a minute,—Tom, it's all over with him; just clap a couple more shot in my gun, will you, for better luck next time?" Then, as his request was complied with, he withdrew another coign from beneath the breech, took a second, and more protracted aim; and, turning to the horrified powder-boy, who held the burning match,—"Give me that linstock, boy, and shut your mouth. Have you got your eye on her, Captain Simpson?" But Captain Simpson, unused to take scenes of carnage quite so systematically, had flung down his spy-glass on the moment of seeing one of his crew struck, and now was vainly endeavouring to bear

the slaughtered seaman below, in hopes of saving his life. "There's no satisfaction in coming a fine piece of gunnery here!" grumbled old Spanker. "These merchantmen are so little up to trap, they don't know a dead man when they see him." Then jumping aside, out of the recoil of his gun, he watched the roll of the ship—squirted out his tobacco-juice, gave a hasty puff at the burning linstock, and fired.

"That's hit her at last," cried the powder-boy, who stood near him, capering and clapping his hands, from excess of joy.

"Ay, youngster," returned Spanker, "that shot's something like, isn't it?—why," looking again more earnestly than before, "isn't that her fore-topsail flying away in ribbons?—Wait a minute, hold your breath—dash my wig, if there isn't her fore-topmast gone over her side. Isn't that jolly, you young shaver?"

"Oh!" replied the lad, forgetting, in his ecstacy, the horrors of the previous moment, "most capital! here's another cartridge;" and extending his hands towards Spanker, while the latter stood with a sponge in his hand, in the very act to pass it down his gun—another flash lit up the sails of the merchant ship; a hollow ringing sound followed close upon the whizzing of the enemy's shot, and, as if by magic—gun—carriage, and the whole apparatus connected with them, shivered into a thousand splinters; part striking the powder-boy dead before him, another part dashing among the little group that were carrying down the dead man at the hatchway, and the remainder burying itself in the lee side of the mizen-mast.

Whether the Privateer had, in this instance, fired two shot at once, and one had struck the weather rigging; or whether some splinter of the brass gun had taken such an irregular direction, it is impossible to say; but before Spanker, who had himself received a severe contusion in the side, recovered from the temporary surprise into which he was thus thrown, his quick ear detected the peculiar sound produced by the snapping of a shroud. Mechanically, his eye turned in the direction from whence this came, but only in time to behold the weather-shrouds of the mizen rigging snap, one after another, under the heavy strain of the wounded mast, like the strings of some huge harp. To snatch up a selvigee strap, and spring to repair the mischief, was the act of a second; but, ere he arrived at the weather bulwark, the last frail support had given way. A snapping of the wounded spar was heard behind him—and he turned round just in time to see the mizen-mast, with all its sails, spars, and rigging, topple over the side to leeward.

For a few moments, the old tar was what he afterwards termed fairly nonplushed; having hitched up his trousers, and sent forth another wondrous jet of his tobacco-juice, his philosophy found vent in the following words:—"A werry windictive shot that, werry, as ever I see. I smells a French prison to leeward, werry strong indeed."

"Not much mistake about that, Mr. Spanker; just lend us a hand at the wheel here, will you? I can't keep her head to wind at all," said a young top-man, who was endeavouring to steer the merchantman.

"I should wonder very much if you could, Mr. Greenhorn; if the Prosperity's head doesn't fall off now, it never will," replied Spanker,

moving to the assistance of the young top-man at the wheel. "Somehow or other," continued the old veteran,—"ships' heads always have had a great inclination to fall off from the wind, when their mizen-masts are knocked overboard, and the wreck towing alongside to leeward, more especially if they're close hauled at the time. There, give the wheel to me—jump you forward, and see what they're all doing at the companion hatchway there. I suspect, by their lying so close in a heap, some of them have lost the number of their mess."

"Ay, ay, bo', I will," said the young seaman, jumping away.

"Avast heaving, youngster, don't be in so tarnation a hurry," interrupted Spanker, stopping him short for a few minutes. "No good ever comes of such a way of slurring over business; and, look ye, if they an't all knocked on the head—just ask two or three of them to come aft here with a tomahawk, and help to cut clear the wreck; the best craft in the world will never steer with such a load of hamper hanging about her as we've got over our lee quarter; stay a minute, what the blazes are you starting and ducking for? It's only the privateer firing again."

"Only, Mr. Spanker?—what the dickens would you have more? If we *are* to go into a French prison, why, the sooner the better, I say. I don't like these confounded long shots, that come knocking a fellow into the middle of next week, every few minutes."

"What's that to you, you lubber, suppose they knocked you into the middle of next month, or even a little bit farther, you'll only be so much nearer your pay-day? Walk straight and fair, every shot has its billet, and would think as little of cutting off a crooked knee, as an upright timber; neither your turn nor mine's coming, this bout. We have lost our complement in killed and wounded already."

"I wish you could only make that a little plainer, Mr. Spanker."

"Plainer?—it's as plain as a pikestaff already. Three knocked on the head out of eight, besides wounded, is a very genteel-like proportion for the Gazette."

But this experienced and very scientific calculation, the young topman did not wait to benefit by: running up to the companion hatchway, he found a heap of his shipmates, as Spanker had said, all lying close together; two were killed, including the first man—a few were bruised and wounded; and the remainder frightened, not so much by their own danger, as by seeing their captain lying, to all appearance, without the slightest sign of life, upon the deck before them. This, however, was a case not so bad in reality as it appeared. Struck by a splinter on the head, and bleeding slightly from the wound, he lay severely stunned. In a few minutes, however, he came once more to himself; and, stout of heart, as iron of limb, looked grimly round at the devastation the privateer had made upon his deck. Hastily binding his bandana handkerchief round his head, and ordering Jackson, with all his disposable hands, to make haste and cut away the wreck, he seated himself upon the shattered stump of the mizen-mast, and took a moment's reflection as to the course which remained, if any did remain, for the further defence of his vessel.

It is astonishing, while your heroic commanders have remained untouched themselves, how very philosophically they have contrived to issue the orders which involved the existence of others—it is when they behold the current of their own life-blood flowing, that the true touch of the tiger begins to make itself manifest. We have already hinted, that Captain Simpson, in all the better requisites of the human heart, was no way wanting. When, however, he looked round upon his decks, beheld his bulwarks battered in and smashed on every side of him, and nearly half his crew lying slaughtered around—more especially when he felt the warm drops of his own blood slowly trickling from his wounded head, the head itself dancing on his shoulders as if recently hired for an opera ballet—more especially when turning his eyes to leeward he beheld the hated cause of all this mischief running quietly on a little abaft his beam, all the bull-dog pugnacity of an enraged Englishman glowed in his bosom, and steeled his determination up to the fiercest pitch of resistance. To think, too, that all these wrongs and indignities were heaped upon him by a Frenchman!—a Frenchman—and he not able to avenge himself by a single stroke of retaliation. "Not able, did I say?" muttered he, between his clenched teeth, "No, I'll be cut to ribbons, hacked into junk, and picked to oakum, but I'll pay the thieves off; before I'll let them call Tom Simpson and his ship their prize—O for only twenty stout hands to board the frog-eating lubbers. O but for one good heavy piece of metal that could carry a shot true. Isn't it a shame on Old England, that she can't send a convoy to her colonies without the poor devils of merchanters being left behind by the frigates to fight a thief of the night like that, crammed full of men, and carrying a long swivel twenty four-pounder; and we with scarcely enough hands to creep our anchor up to our bows, and nothing better than two or three blessed coughing pill-puffers, that wouldn't blow the powder out of an alderman's wig? Well, if there's no sail likely to come to our rescue, I'll try a trick with them that shall save or sink, whether or no. Maintopmast-head, a hoy there! can ye make out any sail in sight?"

A brief and anxious pause succeeded this momentous question, as the captain's stern voice rose powerfully above the din of the busy seamen on deck, who instinctively suspended their various operations to listen for the reply.

Once more, and with all the intensity of strained vision, the young lad at the masthead swept round the horizon with his spy-glass. The new moon, which had now gained the centre of the heavens, threw a dim, yet distinct circlet of light upon the heaving boundary of dark blue waters which met the starry heavens on every side. Once or twice, in the eager excitement of hope and fear, the keen lad beheld, or imagined, the friendly sail for whose approach he had so devoutly prayed. But a moment's steady gaze upon the object dispelled the welcome illusion.

Perched high above the absorbing bustle of the fight below, the deadly struggle had passed beneath his eyes in all its frightful reality. The time, which had appeared but a few moments to those on deck, dragged like hours to him; and when, at length, he beheld the mizen-

mast slowly swerve from its upright position, and then plunge swiftly into the dark flood below, shaking rudely, by the connecting gear, the mast on which he sat, till rope after rope snapped with a fearful jerk beneath the resistless strain, his young heart beat frantically within his bosom, his eyes seemed starting from his head, and his arms convulsively clutched the spar on which he rested, and which he momentarily expected to feel following its fellow.

Relieved from this apprehension, he still plainly perceived, that the privateer, by drawing further ahead on the beam of the Prosperity, would now have the better chance of aiming her unerring shot at the mainmast, while, from all these reasons combined, his position, secure as it seemed from the balls themselves, was, in reality, one far more calculated to inspire apprehension than any of the more dangerous posts below. After a silence of some seconds, during which nothing was heard but the winds and waves, the captain, impatient of delay, was heard once more to repeat his demand—

"Main top mast-head there! Why don't you answer the hail? Is there anything like a sail heaving in sight to windward?"

The words had hardly issued from the captain's lips, when the thin tremulous voice of the youth was heard in answer—

"There's nothing like a sail in sight, either to windward or leward, sir, except a dim speck dead astern."

"No, of course not!" muttered the disappointed captain, with many an oath. "Whenever a cruiser of one's own would be a perfect godsend, there's never one to be met with! If I was only making a swift run out to any port, with a picked crew on board, there be a frigate to windard in no time firing a shot across my fore foot, or betwixt my main and mizen-mast, or perhaps, slap thro' one of my topsails as a signal to heave-to, and allow a pressgang to come on board. However, it's no use grunting over it. Here, Jackson, have you cut away that wreck to leward?"

"Ay sir, it's all clear now." "That's right, then you and Spanker come here, I want to have a word with you." Obedient to the summons the two seamen jumped over to the spot where their commander was sitting, and touching their hats, waited his communication. "What do you say, Jackson," began the captain, "do you see any chance of giving the dodge to that fellow to leward, or shall we strike our colours, and have done with it at once?"

"'Tis hard to say, sir," replied Jackson; "I should like to hold out as long as any man, but what the devil we can do more than what we have done, I can't tell, for the soul of me; there's not a man of us on deck now, that isn't wounded, we have no sort of guns to answer the devil's fire; and now she's got slap upon our beam, she'll keep pelting at us until she knocks all our sticks out of us, and leaves scarcely a man to walk the decks, and then after all, the worst must come to the worst, and she'll overhaul our lockers in the end, just as much as she could at the beginning. The only question that I see, sir, to decide upon, is whether, as our ship's gone, it's any use to send our lives and limbs after her. If you ask my opinion, sir, I can't say that I think it is."

"So that's your opinion, is it?" sulkily growled the captain. "And now what's yours, Spanker?" turning to the old man-of-war's-man. "That I like to have a shy, your honour, even if I lose my stick." "And that's mine, too, my boy," said his delighted superior, slapping him on the shoulder, with grim ecstacy. "So we two will have a fling together, even if there's no one else to keep us company. If there's any on deck would like to go below, he's free and welcome."

"There's no man here, sir, will do that," answered Jackson, feeling, in some degree, that this was a reproach levelled at him; "life is dear to us all, but every Englishman prefers his duty."

"Well said, Jackson, give me your flipper.—Now I'll tell you what my plan is—and there's not a fitter man upon the sea to help me with it than yourself." At the mention of some further resource in their distresses, it may readily be conceived, that the two seamen bent anxiously forward to hear on what line of action their last hope of liberty depended, while the other remaining hands stole over from the lee side of the deck to catch a passing share in the important consultation; nor was the sailor at the helm less anxious:—even the firing of the enemy was for a time disregarded.

"The only hope that remains for us," continued the captain, "without either hands or guns to fight, is either so to disable the privateer that she can't board us, or to delay him till one of our own men-of-war comes up."

"That's all, sir," drily chimed in old Spanker; "as the French say, when they talk of invading Old England, the only difficulty is, how to do it."

"Why yes, Master Sharpshins, that's very clever of you to say. The grand difference here is, that, with regard to invading England, the French must just wait till they can get some Englishmen to do it; while, with regard to disabling that privateer, here are a few English hands all ready for the business, and you amongst them."

"Ready, your honour? ay, I believe I am; ay, and willing too, which is quite as much to the purpose."

"Well, then, listen; here we have got that Frenchman dead to leeward; now while he's amusing himself peppering our hull and rigging, and seeing we can't return him so much as a single shot, no doubt, he's thinking in his own mind, that it's all very fine, and that in half an hour, or so, he'll be walking on board here, and hanging up his infarnal three colours, for all the world like a beef-steak striped with fat and dipped in indigo. However, while he's so cock-a-hoop in the matter, and busy thinking that we can do nothing, I propose quietly to set all the stunsails we can on the larboard side, just as if we were fools enough to hope we could give him the dodge by fair sailing—if I know any thing of Johnny Crappeau, such a manœuvre from a dull merchanter will tickle his conceit most heartily—Most likely he'll let us set our stunsails in peace, just to have the fun of knocking them down again, while, as soon as ever we fairly have got the old tub under good lively motion, we'll up helm, and run slap down aboard on master Johnny, before he knows where he's walking; once get our heavy old bows pitched into his side, abaft the fore chains, and if——" But here occurred an interruption, revealed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

### IN WHICH THE ACTION WITH THE PRIVATEER IS CONCLUDED.

"ONCE, I say," continued the captain, "once get our heavy old bows pitched into his side abaft the fore-chains, and if that young gentleman doesn't pay a visit to Davy Jones's dock-yard for repairs, I know nothing about the matter."

"Hang me, your honour, if that plan won't do," said Spanker, who, true to his first proposition, seemed to relish amazingly this mode of having a shy—in which he certainly was very far from being without the danger of losing his stick. However, a shy it was, and old Spanker resolved to enjoy it to the utmost. To this determined spirit of fighting for the slightest chance, how much does not old England owe of her prosperity, her laws, her freedom, and even of her existence!

"Now, my lads," said the captain, when he saw, with the greatest delight, how readily his scheme was embraced by those on whom mainly depended its execution; "bustle about bravely, and let's make haste, and get our sails set before some unlucky shot from that devil to leeward either takes off any more of our hands, or knocks away any gear, the loss of which may interfere with our plans." "Ay, ay, sir," replied the ready hands, moving cheerfully and rapidly at the word. Then addressing himself to the boy, who still kept watch aloft,

"Main-top-mast-head, a-hoy there! Sam, my bo', come down here below." Never in this world may it fairly be supposed that human order was more readily obeyed. With the speed of lightning the delighted lad slung his glass round his shoulder, and darting down the weather rigging, stood at his captain's side.

"Come down from the mast-head, sir," said he, cheerfully touching his hat, and then making the last report of his unpleasant duty; "that is a sail, sir, dead astern, but she rises very slowly." "Very well, Sam. Now jump below to the passengers in the cabin, and tell them we are nearly all killed and wounded, and now's their time to come up, and make the best of the fight, tho' I don't suppose there's much to be counted on from them." The last was added *sotto voce*, as the boy went below, with the very cheerful and pleasant message the captain had so considerately charged him to deliver. Considering the kind of prospect thus held out to any new-comer on the field of action, we certainly must think, that the captain acted with becoming prudence in not expecting much assistance from the quarter to which it was addressed, more especially when we bear in mind the fact of its being intended for civilians, whose previous pursuits were not of the kind best calculated to make them

aware of the high honour of succeeding to the shoes of those who had been "all killed and wounded." When Sam, therefore, rushed into the cabin, he found its tenants engaged in their devotions; while even this usually peaceful occupation smacked of the deep emergencies of the hour. It had already been made very evident by the shot, that whether they entered the cabin or the quarter-deck was to those iron-hearted messengers of death a matter of equal indifference. This, though it did not greatly raise the affection of the passengers for their character, yet procured them nevertheless an infinite deal of respect; and in order to get out of the way of such summary pursuivance, Mrs. Archdeacon Pontifex had exhibited at once the depth of her resources and the profundity of her devotion, by throwing herself at length along the deck, with her eyes shut, and holding up her clasped hands in supplication, instead of kneeling; while the reverend archdeacon, in close imitation of her posture, uttered aloud such supplications for victory and safety as his memory, at that troublous period, enabled him to recollect. Besides the archdeacon, and what his wife termed his suite, there were at this time several other passengers on board; and as they naturally wished to avail themselves of the services of so distinguished a luminary of the church as Archdeacon Pontifex, and, moreover, greatly approved of the attitude and position taken up by his wife, they all saw fit to prostrate themselves in a similar manner, and with a similar intent.

Nora and Evelyn alone contented themselves with that form of worship which their church prescribed, and which they were fain to believe would, in the hands of a guiding Providence, be sufficient to meet death or any other trials they might be doomed to undergo. The solitary instance of these two, however, was insufficient to change the aspect given to the meeting by the recumbent majority, and when Sam entered the cabin, the impression made on his mind was that he beheld some animated church-yard, where the effigies on the tombs of the deceased parties had suddenly awoke to life, not motion, at the voice of some brother tenant of the grave, who was reading the service for their souls. Nowise daunted, however, Samuel delivered the message with which he stood charged from the captain; but no one rose to comply with it, or by sign or motion gave the slightest token that it had been even heard, except Evelyn, who, silently commending herself to Heaven in this emergency, slowly rose from her kneeling posture, and prepared to follow the boy on deck. With all the quickness of affection, Nora instantly guessed at what was passing in her mind, and throwing her arms round Evelyn's neck, demanded in tones of intense agony and apprehension, "Where, love, would you go?"

If there had before this existed in the minds of any of those present the slightest doubt as to the real relative position between Nora and her friend, this touch of nature, so sudden, so unpremeditated, so irresistible, must at once have convinced the sceptic, past all further doubting, that the pale and handsome stripling of a secretary was in truth that which he only pretended to be, the husband of Nora, and the father of her child—"Do not! do not go! I beseech, I implore you!" cried Nora, clinging around the other with the softest tenderness and affec-

tion, while tears burst from her eyes at the thoughts which this fresh danger and separation called up. "What have you to do with fighting? you're a passenger: how can you think of leaving me, who have no other hope to cling to?—you must not, you shall not go! Why rush into this needless danger?—think of all you have before exposed yourself to by similar boldness. What is your strength, that it can be of the slightest use to fight in any struggle hand to hand?"

"Nora, I've a duty to perform," returned Evelyn, still struggling to get away, and in whose tortured and unhappy bosom there existed an intense desire to resign the burden of that life which she was too proud, courageous, and high-principled, to take with her own hand—

"A duty to perform," repeated Nora; "O yes, God knows you have, than which nothing can be holier or stronger, a duty to perform to Heaven and to me—why then shrink from it without one excuse? Stay, I implore you, and discharge it here, in comparative safety, and at my side." Though Nora's arguments failed to convince the fiery bosom to which they were addressed, there was one close at hand which they softened with quite as good an effect. It was that, namely, of Sam, who, unable to withstand the lovely eyes of Nora drowned in tears, quietly but rapidly withdrew from the cabin, and locking in, as he thought, the refractory husband, returned to the quarter-deck, and contented himself with simply telling the captain that they were all at prayers. "Of course," growled the captain, bursting out into sundry oaths touching the souls and bodies of the passengers below, not much in unison with their present supplications; "At prayers? Of course they are, tho' they wouldn't have been half so well employed as that if they hadn't been wanted on deck. Take and batten the beggars down below—then, whether we go up or go down, they're provided for—now then, as that matter's got rid of," as Sam obeyed his words to the letter, "let us go jollily into action."

As the master gave utterance to this peculiarly merry and comforting exhortation, he cast a look around him to see what was the exact position borne by himself and the privateer. The latter was now steadily bearing full upon his beam, and continued very sedulously, with the interval of a few minutes, to discharge the contents of her immense long gun into the defenceless hull of the more bulky merchantman.

"Now, my lads," said the captain, passing his rough sleeve over his brow, where the perspiration stood in large heavy drops, "if you don't look smart this time, you won't have a chance again in a hurry. Spanker, you jump forward with the rest on 'em; I'll stand by the helm myself; and as soon as you're ready forward with the studden-sails, sing out, and I'll give the word to hoist away."

"Ay, ay, sir," returned Spanker and the rest of the seamen, running forward with that alacrity inspired on the one hand by hopes of their own escape, and strengthened on the other by the feeling of revenge against an enemy who had done them such damage; while the mate, who had gone below to get up some of the sails required, appeared at this opportune juncture, and by his example and voice encouraged them in the exertions they were making.

"Now, Johnny, my boy," muttered the old captain to himself, as with considerable difficulty he attended to the steerage of his vessel, "I've got a nice little pill in store for you that you don't quite expect to swallow. Let me see; what would be the best way of managing it? If I try to bear down upon you all at once, you'll be up to the dodge, clap your helm up, and give me the slip in no time. No, no, that won't do. My better plan will be to pretend that I can't keep to windward, and so edge down gradually—there's good enough excuse for that when a fellow's had his mizen-mast knocked overboard." Suiting his conduct to his design, the master here gradually put up his helm, and allowed the ship's head to fall off, but in so gentle and imperceptible a manner that it seemed rather an accident against the will of the steersman, than the result of any preconcerted design on the part of the captain. Meanwhile the enemy on board the privateer beheld this evidence, as they imagined, of the destructive nature of their fire with considerable self-gratulation; and, taking it as an additional proof that the unfortunate vessel, now no longer able to steer properly, would soon be in their possession, they watched with glee the extremities of their adversary, and, with all the advantages of a still closer position, merrily poured in the contents of their long gun. By this time the trader had approached to within about five cables' length of the privateer, who now bore upon her lee-bow. Still the captain steadily pursued his purpose; and by the gentlest perceptible degrees approached his hated tormentor, keeping his eyes occasionally on the proceedings of his seamen, now busily engaged in setting the desired sail. At last, every preparation having been completed, the quiet tones of the mate were heard "All ready forward."

"Hoist away," cried the captain; and, hitching a rope round the spokes of the steerage-wheel to keep it fixed, he jumped down himself among the crew, and lent a hand to hoist the sails desired. "Now with a will, my boys," cried he, "run 'em up; up with 'em heartily: never mind the drag; if you want to run away from a French prison, you must do it here." Animated by the captain's example, the crew, although inadequate from their diminished numbers to the task, paced rapidly along the deck, and hoisted up to their proper places the fluttering studding-sails. No sooner was this desired object attained, than the captain rushed back to his post at the helm, and prepared to execute the rest of his manœuvre.

"Now, my lads, all of you arm yourselves with pistols, sabres, and boarding-pikes, and steal forward quietly in the bows. Once let me pitch our old craft into the Frenchman's sides, and I'll be forrard having a slice at Johnny Crappo with the foremost of you. Sam, my boy, there are my pistols lying inside that caboose, belt and all; just see that the priming's snug, and pick me out a nice sharp cutlass. If you respect your enemy, Sam, never touch a man's throat with a blunt tool—'tis neither manly nor English-like."

"Ay, ay, sir," said Sam, who felt deeply touched at the soul of honour which his captain displayed in this delicate consideration, "here's a cutlass, sir, that you might shave that 'ere privateer captain's beard with if you liked."

"D—— his beard, Sam, I'll cut his throat," suddenly and savagely replied the captain in a manner that differed strangely enough from his previous "delicacy."

"Shall I pick out a pike for you, too, sir?" replied Samuel, grinning with great satisfaction at the promised treat in store for the Frenchman.

"Ay, my boy, do; after breaking his fast on our hull in this manner, the son of a sea cook 'll want a toothpick. Are you ready all forrard?" addressing the seamen.

"All ready, sir," was the reply.

"Keep yourselves snug, then, my boys, till you see the privateer's foreyard over our forecastle. There are not so many of us that we can afford to be picked off by their shot. Now, then, down goes the helm."

As the captain spoke these words, round flew the shafts of the steerage wheel: the bows of the trader yielded immediately to the motion of the rudder, and, flying rapidly off from the wind, pointed directly down upon the beam of the privateer. It was now, for the first time, that the captain of the latter began to perceive the manœuvre intended against him. Up to this period, he had continued to watch with increasing satisfaction the various symptoms given by his prey, of her crew being no longer able to manage their own vessel. Symptoms both of illness and extremity are admirable things in their way, but it certainly proves unfortunate to those who may happen to misconstrue them. Such was the case in the present instance. The privateer had allowed the trader to draw so near, in the hope of facilitating the capture of the latter, that when her real design became apparent, there was no longer any space left for its defeat. The sails which the trader had hoisted, though inexpertly set from the inefficiency of the seamen, had, from the large quantity of canvas they exposed to the breeze, given a great impetus to the bulky form of the merchantman. Built with a view rather for tonnage than speed, or perhaps with a vain and hasty glance at the latter, the solid, massive bows ploughed up before them a little world of foam and spray, which, appealing not more forcibly to the ear by its noise than to the eye by its appearance, and urged wildly forward by the press of sail upon it, spread terror and dismay along the decks of the privateer the moment that a collision appeared likely.

Low in the water, light in her build, and framed expressly for speed alone, the fragile sides of the privateer were the least likely to afford any protection for the encounter of so heavy a vessel as the West Indiaman. This none knew better than the Frenchmen themselves. On the moment, therefore, that they beheld the large and threatening bows of their enemy bearing full upon the weather-beam of their own craft, a cry of horror arose along their decks; and with it the English could faintly distinguish something like a command given from the quarter-deck. What this command might be they knew not; nor could they well judge whether any attempt was made to carry it into effect. From their hiding-places the crew of the trader could see and hear their enemies, flying about and screaming as they flew, uttering a thousand French imprecations, which were all of them lost to those on whom they were outpoured. A few of the older hands

who seemed able to retain their presence of mind on this emergency, had wisely had recourse to the only power they possessed of preventing the trader's designs; and while some threw over the threatened part of their vessel such hasty apologies for fenders to ward off the concussion as they could at the moment lay their hands on, a dozen grim-faced Gauls levelled their muskets over the weather-bulwark of the privateer, and commenced a sharp and incessant discharge of fire-arms at every thing that bore the semblance of a human head on board the merchant vessel, during the few minutes she continued bearing down upon them. The only person who seemed wholly unmoved by the surrounding horrors was the French captain, who stood quietly puffing a cigar, and standing, like the Englishman, at the helm. He no sooner detected the intention of the foe's running down, than, swiftly altering his vessel's course, he too bore away to leeward, in hopes to avoid, or at least mitigate, the blow of the merchant's bow, and so either run side by side with her off the wind, or, rapidly pouring his men on board, thus at once end a contest, that had already been infinitely more prolonged, and was rapidly displaying far greater danger, than he had apprehended.

"All hands to board—ease off the weather-braces," were the commands rapidly given by him, in his own language. "Be cool, my men!—be cool! By the cross of St. John, we'll have the English blackguards yet! Steady there, forward; why don't you ease off the jib sheet? Don't fire on her bows, my boys; there's not a soul to be seen there: try, all hands of you, if you can't take off the captain at the steerage-wheel." But before this kind and wholesome piece of advice for the captain's welfare was offered, the bulky possessor of that dignity had prudently put the cover of the shattered mizen-mast between himself and the fire of the foe; there only remained, therefore, the graceful protuberance of a certain redundant portion of his figure showing itself behind the mast astern, and his arm, with which he continued to steer, projecting from its shelter before. The arm, it must be confessed, was rather of the bulky species; and at this the whole fire of a dozen muskets was instantly but vainly levelled. Before, however, many shots could be exchanged, the swiftly approaching bow of the Prosperity came so close on board the privateer, that all view of the steerage-wheel of the former was excluded from the decks of the Frenchman, which, it will be remembered, were considerably lower in the water. The effort made by the Frenchman to get out of the way of his huge antagonist had been altogether vain: the privateer was falling rapidly off from the wind as the Prosperity got within half a cable's length of her; but the rapidity with which the latter came down prevented all but a very partial execution of the Frenchman's plan. When, therefore, it became apparent that a collision was inevitable, cries and confusion on board the privateer rose to a height that can be more easily imagined than described. Screams of horror—curses of rage—imprecations for safety—words of command—all rose together upon the morning breeze, and, sounding shrilly and frightfully upon the human ear, were borne quietly over the face of nature, happily inaccessible to these results of human passions.

On board the English vessel everything was as mute as the death that followed in her wake; still the gallant little band, that under such disadvantages had defended her to this extremity, remained quiet in their hiding-places, without expressing in any sound louder than a whisper their hopes and fears. As the fray proceeded, still steadily and rapidly onward the merchant vessel flew—the noise and tumult of the maddened waters beneath her bow sounding more and more loudly and fatally in the ears of the Frenchman with every moment that elapsed. Still the privateer endeavoured, by every effort of despair, to escape the frightful fate awaiting her: with her helm jammed up to the last excessive point, to hasten the falling-off of her bow to leeward,—with spars and booms, oars and hammocks, hastily thrust over her side, to lessen the dangers of her collision,—with nearly sixty men, armed to the teeth, firing on every spot that was likely to contain a foe, and ready, on the first moment, to spring on board the merchantman, and massacre every one who dared to prolong a defence. Amid all these feelings of extremity, the iron-nerved English captain remained, without moving a muscle, at his post; and, holding the helm in his hands, strove with every exertion to counterbalance the efforts of the privateers to escape, until he beheld the fore-yard of the enemy project aslant over his own forecastle. The moment his experienced eye detected this, he hastily hitched a rope's end round one of the spokes of the wheel, crying out as he did so, "Now's your time, my men—forward on the forecastle, my hearts of oak;—up and at 'em—cut down every man of 'em—don't let one come on board." As he gave these stern orders of extermination, which nothing but the dangers of his own position could justify, he rapidly belted round him the set of pistols that lay ready for his use, and, snatching up the sword, respecting which he had given such tender directions to Sam, rushed forward in person to the forecastle. Here a scene of indescribable horror presented itself. While yet the captain was on his road, the ponderous bows of the Prosperity, urged by the full impetus of their speed, the immense spread of canvas set upon her, and the enormous weight of the huge vessel, came heavily down upon the light, thin side of the privateer. At that tremendous touch, with an effect almost like the supernatural results of magic, spars, booms, oars—every hasty attempt at self-protection gave way with a tremendous crash. The shock on board of the Prosperity was scarcely felt; while the long, low form of the privateer seemed literally to reel beneath its violence—retiring bodily to leeward, several feet through the water, at the excessive blow. Onward still pressed the huge unwieldy bow of the Prosperity, like some of those vast and shapeless monsters of the night, that in our dreams seem incapable either of relenting or being resisted. As it pressed on, the eager eyes of the English seamen could behold with joy the comparatively thin bulwarks of the French privateer cracking and splintering before the enormous pressure in every direction; till at length she almost bore the appearance of fairly doubling in two beneath the superior force destroying her. In the mean while, no sooner did the bowsprit of the Englishman project over the other's decks, than the

hornet swarm of the latter's crew catching at the spars, the bowsprit-shrouds, the nightingale, the spritsail-yard, and every part of the connecting gear, made a last desperate effort to board their antagonist, and so to save their lives, even if unable to preserve their vessel. But the stanch-hearted captain was on his post at this extremity.

"Now's your time, my boys—fire into 'em—give it the beggarly varmin, right and left—we don't want none of 'em on board here. Give them the contents of your muskets and pistols first, and show 'em the use of an Englishman's cutlass afterwards." Not more slow to act than to command, the captain drew from his belt first one weapon and then the other; and as he discharged each barrel, one of his struggling enemies fell into the bubbling waters, purpled with his blood a petty circlet of the foam, and then sank from the sight for ever. "There she goes! hurrah, my boys!—there she sinks at last—there she fills: cut down the varmin, right and left," as the sides of the privateer, unable any longer to withstand the pressure of the merchantman, broke in, fore and aft, with a melancholy crash, that was heard above all the sounds of the conflict—while the greedy waters, rushing into the chasm thus opened in her hull, seemed to swallow up their prey, which swiftly disappeared, a mass of wreck and arms and men, under the bowsprit of the trader, into the void beneath. For a moment, as the deck gained a level with the waters, her downward progress seemed briefly stayed—'twas but the pause of a second,—the heavy bow of the merchantman still pressed on, —the planks splintered, cracked, and flew, fore and aft,—the white bubbling foam rushed in over her bulwarks and long swivel-gun, washing off many of the struggling seamen from their holds,—masts, rigging, and a host of smaller objects, gradually glided under the fore foot of the Prosperity, carrying with them a score of seamen, whose screams of agony were drowned in the general tumult, and leaving behind some thirty more armed men, who clung to the rigging of the bowsprit with all that desperation which a love of life inspires.

Foremost among these was the captain of the unfortunate privateer; and if his bravery and determination could win him from the fate at hand he might esteem himself secure. Waving his cutlass above his head in one hand, while with the other he strove to clamber up the rigging of the bowsprit, he cheered his men on in the fearful contest with loud and repeated cries, uttered in their own language.

"On, Frenchmen, on! Never mind their fire—cling to the rigging with one hand, and shoot them down with the other. By the cross of St. John! there are not half-a-dozen of them altogether;—hang on but for a few minutes, and these rascally English are in our power."

Animated by these cries, the Frenchmen did indeed seem inclined to let no advantage go for want of the utmost pertinacity in maintaining it. Like a swarm of bees clustering round the tiny bough of some old tree, the enemy were to be seen in bunches of four or five, or even eight, clinging to some slight ropes belonging to the gear of the bowsprit, which their frail support strained to the utmost, till it appeared every moment about to give way beneath their weight: others again were hanging so low as to have their feet absolutely trailing in the water,

while with their hands they endeavoured to drag themselves up to the forecastle of the trader; while three or four, unable to effect this with one arm, had recourse in their desperation to the expedient of supporting their cutlasses by grasping the blades with their teeth, while they applied both hands for boarding their hoped-for prize.

Small as the crew of the trader had become, it is clear that they now fought at a great advantage; but however rapidly they loaded and discharged their shots, they had no sooner the gratification of seeing one poor wretch knocked off into the sea, than three or four seemed instantly ready to supply his place. But however fiercely the attack was kept up by the privateer's men, who had no alternative but death below or victory above, they had little reason, in the fierceness of their struggle, to hold themselves superior against those whom they fought.

Loud as were the cries of the French captain, the sturdy Englishman gave him back cheer for cheer. Not an instant occurred in this brief but decisive conflict but afforded him opportunity for gratulation, warning, or attack.

"Kick away, you dirty vagarushes," loading and firing as fast as he could at the unfortunate Frenchmen—"kick away, ye dirty vermin; you needn't be so mighty particular which of ye shall go first; there's room enough below for the whole boiling of ye;—that's right, Jackson, pepper away at 'em. Spanker, my boy, draw it strong—this is rare fun of a bright morning, isn't it?" for the sun, which had just cleared the horizon, poured forth from the chambers of heaven the glorious light of purity and peace on this deadly struggle.

"Ay, your honour," returned Spanker, with a grim smile, as, covered with gunpowder, his visage, rough at all times, now appeared to wear a most demoniacal aspect, "this is a nice bit of work before breakfast; but shiver my timbers, sir, these are game devils to fight, anyways."

"Ay, Spanker, my boy, they can't help it. Curse 'em, that's the worst of it, when a Frenchman must fight he will fight; but just give him the least genteel bit of a loop-hole, and it isn't long before he's had quite enough of it.—Hallo! d—— my eyes, shoot that fellow off the bowsprit."

"Hurrah! my friends, now then forward. By the cross of St. John the day is our own!" cried the Frenchman in question, who was no other than the captain of the privateer, and who had at last contrived to gain a position at once so enviable in point of glory—so little to be desired for personal comfort.

"Shoot him down, I say," roared the captain, who was busy loading his own piece; "put a ball through his head one of you, or he'll be aboard in a few minutes; once they set their foot on this deck, it'll be the devil's own work to get them off again, and even then we shall stink of garlic for the next month to come. Down with 'em, one and all—no quarter as long as they've arms in their hands."

With an eagerness not surpassed by that which even the captain displayed, Jackson levelled his piece, and, taking his best aim, fired; but the French captain, nimble as a monkey, ducked and dived, and

jumped and swayed his body in such a manner, that he seemed to laugh at a musket ball.

"Burn your eyes!" exclaimed the mate savagely, as he perceived the captain advancing rapidly on board.

"Better luck next time, sir," coolly said old Spanker, levelling his musket in his turn, and firing with as little effect. Still the French captain ducked and dived, and waved his sword, and with reiterated cries on the cross of St. John cheered on his seamen to the attack.

For an instant Spanker seemed to regard the fire-proof Gaul with a look of incredulity; then, as he perceived the Frenchman did not drop as he proceeded to load again, grumbling to himself, as it were, in apology, he muttered, "It's no sort of satisfaction firing into them scraggy Frenchmen; they never has no blood in 'em."

"Now, my friends," cried the French captain, waving his sword—"now's our time—now, my friends, now's your time; scramble up and board her while they're loading."

"What!" cried the English captain in a rage, as he saw the little captain still advancing, "isn't there one of you lubbers that can knock that little bantam-cock off his perch? Here, shiver my timbers, I'll St. Jan ye; mimicking the favourite war-cry of his opponent, flinging down his musket, and drawing his huge cutlass, he seized hold of the fore-stay, and drawing his arm back with the full strength of his body, prepared to cut down the captain of the privateer: the latter, however, who saw the stroke coming, lifted up the guard of his small sword;—but so weak a defence was quite insufficient for the object desired. Down fell the heavy blow, and striking deep into the silver guard of the Frenchman's rapier, beat down his hand upon his head, and with the suddenness and violence of the blow, at once hurled him overboard among the swarm of his rapidly-diminishing crew, three of whom he in his fall struck overboard beneath the foaming bows of the Prosperity."

"Hurrah! my boys," cried the captain, raising his sword in triumph—"jolly Old England for ever, and a rotten rope for all St. Jans say I. Now Spanker, now Jackson, now Sam, now's your time; load and fire as fast as ever you can, for the lives of ye. Stay, Sam, my boy, you're wasting your shot; out with your cutlass, and cut away the gear by which these French frogs are hanging. Cut away; never mind their cries, my boy; you'll only let them go into the water, and you'll do 'em a world of good—I'll swear, from their faces, they haven't been washed this twelvemonth."

In compliance with these orders, the fusees of the little but determined crew flashed right and left in the bright rays of the rising sun, and threw out the thick clouds of their destructive smoke over the laughing surface of the glorious sea, while the captain, still foremost in playing the part he wished others to enact, laid his whole length along the bowsprit, as much as possible to protect his person from the enemy below, while his long keen cutlass sweeping swiftly round him, steeped its bright point in the life-blood of many an unfortunate Gaul, already worn and tired to the last extremity by perpetual plunging

in the water and the reiterated effort to get on board; but though their defence has been thus prolonged against superior numbers by the determined courage of the crew of the Prosperity, there yet remained sixteen or seventeen privateer's men, four or five of whom, in defiance of their antagonists, contrived to reach on either side the larboard and starboard forechains. This, from its position, the captain was unable to foresee; and while very busy dealing out destruction to the unfortunate wretches below, a sudden cry of fire caused him to turn his head, and to his horror and mortification he beheld the bunt of the foresail already in flames from the discharge of his seamen's muskets, and the fire rapidly extending up to the foretop; but though grieved and disheartened, even this calamity did not deprive him of his presence of mind.

"Let it be, my boys—let it go," cried he, "since it has caught. Let it burn itself out. Keep your eyes on the Frenchmen, and never mind the fire. There's our foremast gone, but——"

The rest of the sentence was yet upon his lips, when its conclusion was arrested by a sudden cry in French—"By the holy cross of St. John! now's our time;—now we have the rascals in our power."

The stout-hearted captain directed his attention to this fresh point of surprise, and there to his consternation was his old friend the French captain flourishing one of his own heavy ship's cutlasses, skipping about with as much animation as ever, uttering his war-cry in a style more voluble than pleasant, and heading a party of six privateer's-men, who had crept aboard from the fore-chains.

"Incarnate devils!" cried the captain, springing from his position, and endeavouring as rapidly as possible to spring on his own forecastle, and there exterminate this fresh danger; but the task was less easy of execution than design—the Frenchmen, savage and infuriated to the last degree, had fallen on his insufficient crew from behind. Jackson was cut down before the captain's eyes by a blow from the privateer's cutlass, while another of his followers, who in the hurry of the moment had caught up a windlass-handle, discharged its full weight upon the occiput of poor Spanker. Whatever respectable degree of thickness belonged to poor Spanker's cranium was utterly subdued by this attack: he sank before the blow; so that when the captain leaped upon the deck, he was instantly surrounded, and while yet his death-dealing arm was circling round its master's head, a whole swarm of the privateers, still clinging to the bows of the ship, clambered up unarmed, and flinging themselves upon his shoulders from behind, fairly encumbered every effort to prolong his defence; and bearing him with violence to the deck, there left his burly form a prisoner on board that vessel, that had now become (oh! bitter words) the prize of the enemy.

"By gar, you fort dam fellow," cried the French captain, with a mixture of rage and admiration, shaking his fist over the vainly-struggling form of the English captain; "why for you no have enough of this dam fighting? Croix de St. Jean! one would tink you did belong to de herd of swine possessed by le diable: lie still, lie still, and don't get your head broke for nothing. Your ship in flames, your seamens hors-de-combat, what more you want? you dam bull-headed

Anglais! Are you not de honourable prisoner of war?—why you no rendez yourself quietly? Take him below—lash his hands behind him," added he, speaking to his men in French.

However great the blessings enjoyed by the captain in the eyes of the privateer's-men, no arguments put forward in the broken French of the latter sufficed to convince the sturdy John Bull that his state was too desirable to be mended, fiercely, bitterly—and we may add, most vainly, he struggled and wrestled to get free; but, like the Lilliputians mastering Gulliver, the enemy swarmed upon him too thickly to render any of these efforts in the least degree available. Nothing could be more ludicrous than the volley of oaths which he poured out upon his hated captors; but, unmindful of these, they passed a rope's-end securely round his herculean form, and, as soon as they had fairly deprived him of all power to do mischief, dragged him aft on his own quarter-deck, and, turning him on his back, left him there, like a huge turtle, to flap his fins and snap his beak, powerless even to do that which the anomalous tenant of the deep is able to effect in its most helpless state—namely, make soup. At present, however, both he and the Frenchman had other fish to fry; for the fire, which had caught the foresail, having been allowed to run its course, had traversed up the rigging in those few brief moments, during which its progress was neglected, and spreading rapidly from sail to sail, and spar to spar, left nothing on the foremast but a mass of blazing rags, fluttering out before the fierce gale that only served to fan their fury.

"By the cross of St. John!" cried the French captain, looking aloft with the first moment's leisure, and speaking in his own language, "what is to be done with this infernal merchantman now that we've got her? Here, Toulmin, Lalande, Fourbice," calling around him such of his oldest seamen as the chances of the fight had spared; "what say you? Have we any chance of preserving that foremast?" But at this instant the slings of the fore-yard having been burnt through by fire, and the chain and staple which formed its additional support drawing from the same cause, the burning mass, with all the sails attached to it in a state of fierce combustion, fell down upon the forecastle, and threatened, unless speedy steps were taken, to communicate the fire from the rigging to the hull of the Prosperity. Up to this point the bound captain had remained quietly venting his oaths and his grievances to the prince of air; but unable to stand this last attack on his favourite vessel, roared out in a voice of thunder to the privateer captain—

"D—— your eyes! do you call yourself a seaman? Look at that burning sail forward in the bows of her. Suppose the old ship is yours: will you stand by, and see her burnt to the water's edge?"

This energetic remonstrance, though it was not altogether comprehended by the party to whom it was addressed, instantly attracted the attention of that polite personage, and running up to the captain, whose looks more than his words expressed his meaning, "What you say, will you have de parole?"

"Look at that burning sail, you lubber. Will you let the ship be on fire—in a nice sort of state that would be to drift into the Bay of Biscay."

"What you mean, sir? Suppose we let you up, will you *faire l'utile?*" Then seeing that he was not yet quite comprehended, "for d—— you, Englishman, speak *vite*, will you no fight?"

"Fight, you lubber—is this a time to fight and the ship in flames?" The captain of the privateer immediately turning to his men, desired them to cast his enemy loose; and in a few minutes both friend and foe were busily engaged in subduing the imminent danger that threatened the vessel.

The first act of Captain Simpson was to run forward on the forecastle, and see if there was a chance of either of his own men coming back to existence; but the mate he found insensible and dangerously wounded, on the booms; while Sam was coolly sitting, with his arms crossed on his breast, watching the flames as a schoolboy might do, who had wagered a week's pocket-money upon the going out of the parson and clerk; as urchins term the two last sparks on a burned sheet of paper. Spanker, on the other hand, who had been more stunned than hurt, was slowly rubbing his bleeding head, and beginning to recollect what was or should be going on around him: while the crackling of the fierce flame on the foremast, the flapping of the blazing sails in the wind, and the babel of sounds that arose from the alarmed Frenchmen, formed a very good excuse for the belief which he afterwards admitted to have entertained, namely, that he had passed into the other world, and got by accident into the wrong place. From the horrors of such a fate he was, however, speedily and effectually aroused, by the well-remembered voice of his captain, who, kindly laying his hand on his shoulder, exclaimed,

"Why, Spanker, my heart of oak, how are ye? Are you much hurt—how's your head? Come, look alive, man, there's no time to be lost—we're fairly licked at last, though we did make a stiff fight of it. Shiver my timbers, if you'd only aimed well with your musket. Come, it's no use talking—can you stand on your pins, my boy? The Frenchmen are on board of us, and we are struck; the fore-mast is blazing like turpentine, and if you don't look sharp the ship 'll be a-fire."

"'Tis an ill wind that blows nobody good, your honour," cried Spanker, staggering slowly to his feet, then taking a look aloft, "there's only one thing to be done with this spar, and that is, to cut away as hard as we can drive."

"Ay, my boy, that's all—out with the axes. Cut you away the lee rigging, while I pitch into the stick itself. Bad luck to the chances of war!—a finer pine never grew in forest, or exchanged branches for checks—but it's no use grieving. Jump you along, my hearty, into the lee-chains. I suppose when these noisy French beggars see me chopping away, they may take it into their heads to follow the example; a little bit of fire seems to frighten them as much as if they'd all burned their fingers."

In this, however, Captain Simpson did not do fair justice to his captors, for no sooner did they see the steps which he deemed it necessary to take, than half-a-dozen of the privateer's men, with the captain at their head, seizing each man a hatchet, or tomahawk, and some even

their cutlasses, and rushing through the flakes of fire and burning pitch which continued to drop down from the fore-top, assisted Captain Simpson in cutting down the burning spar, and the rigging that supported it to leeward.

"Spanker, my boy," cried the captain, as soon as he perceived the moment had arrived for the purpose, "are you all clear there in the lee fore-chains?"

"All clear, sir."

"Then jump over to windward, and cut away the weather fore-shrouds and laniards, while I run aft to the helm. When you get to the last laniard, sing out. I'll luff her up in the wind's eye: the burning wreck will fall over the lee-bows, and you stand by to cut it clear."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"And, Spanker," added the captain, "if you should feel inclined to be very humane, you may just sing out to them Frenchmen to keep out of the way, though it isn't much matter if it should please the Lord that half-a-dozen of 'em get jammed under the falling spars. Them Frenchmen is always like so many fleas—they take a devil of a deal of squeezing before they're hurt."

And, with this exquisite example of kindness and philosophy, the captain flew aft to the helm to be ready at Spanker's call.

A few sharp vigorous strokes were then heard from the tomahawk of the latter, succeeded by his clear hearty voice.

"I say, you jolly mounseers to leeward there, stand out of the way," making a sign with his hand to be more easily understood; then, as he saw the Frenchmen dispersing at his call, he looked aft towards his captain, and gave the concerted cry, "All ready forward, sir."

"Cut away," was the quick answer.

Round flew the spokes of the steerage wheel, up went the head of the Prosperity into the wind, the sudden blast bore full upon the burning and wounded foremast, and with a slight plunge the whole flaming mass fell overboard.

A slight cheer was raised by the Frenchmen as they saw the late object of their terror go over the side, and rushing to the spot with their swords and hatchets, they soon detached the remaining gear which yet connected it with the vessel, and saw the quenched sails and timbers float harmlessly away to leeward.

In the mean while, the grim old Captain Simpson, whose face was perfectly blackened with powder, and dotted here and there with streaks of blood, seemed to watch, with a singular satisfaction, the exultations of the Frenchmen, under the guidance of their mercurial chief; while ever and anon his eyes stole up to the main-topgallant-mast head, and a smile gathered round his lips at the secret cause of satisfaction which he there beheld.

It was not until the Frenchmen had finished clearing the bows of the vessel from the wreck of the foremast, and had time to consider what their future course should be, deprived as they were of their late floating home, that their captain began to reflect on the best mode of

securing the fore and erecting jury spars for the main mast, that he beheld, to the infinite horror of himself and crew and the great delight of Captain Simpson, that the flames had travelled up the main-topmast and main-topgallant-mast stays, and communicating with the main-topsail and main-gallantsail, thus carried further aft to the only remaining spar, that fire which they had extinguished with so much risk and trouble on the forecastle. The rage of the Frenchmen, their stamping, swearing, and useless bustle, were inconceivable; while Captain Simpson, pretending to sympathise in all their grief, looked on in real enjoyment of their distress, and drew from its extremity the brightest auguries of his own future freedom.

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## CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

### CONTAINS THE SECOND EPISODE.

After considerable difficulty and danger, the only alternative by which finally to quench the fire on deck, proved to be a repetition of that sacrifice which the captors of the Prosperity had already made of the foremast. After a vigorous use of the hatchet, the hapless Prosperity rolled a dismasted hulk on the broad Atlantic.

"Well, Spanker, my boy, it's no use steering when we've got no sails, is it?" said the captain, taking the turn of a rope's-end round the spokes of the steerage wheel, and coolly sitting down upon the binnacle, and slowly extracting from his black-glazed hat a wondrously variegated bandanna, he proceeded to wipe from his reeking brow the traces of the late fray.

Spanker said nothing, but first seating himself on deck, and then propping his back against the stump of the mizen-mast, he folded his arms on his breast, ejected a long stream of tobacco juice, and after a solemn pause, bespeaking vast consideration, drew a deep sigh and replied, "Well, your honour, our cruise is up a little sooner than we calculated; but I don't see no port any ways nigh handy whatsomever."

"Port be d——," said the captain sullenly, looking on at the scene of wreck that lay before him as shattered with the shot, covered with burnt canvas, smouldering ropes, broken spars, and with several pools of blood scattered about her decks, her three masts cut and carried away, with nothing but a few feet of stump remaining, the merchantman appeared the beau ideal of wreck, disaster, and confusion.

"No, your honour," responded Spanker, whose eyes seemed with equal philosophy to follow those of his superior, "I don't see much chance of port, tho' by the same token I wish we had a quarter cask of that same licker aboard here, and what with the powder, and the fire, and the lick on the head which one of them Mounseers gave me, I feel so thirsty I do believe I could drink a gallon out of a quart pot."

But if this was intended as a hint to his officer, it was a most ingenious device most villanously thrown away; the unfortunate proprietor of the Prosperity seemed so occupied by his misfortunes that he offered no reply.

"I must say, your honour," quoth Spanker, returning to the charge again, "I am rather koorious to see what these 'ere Mounseers will do with the barkey now they've got her."

"Do, my boy," and as the captain turned round to the stanch old seaman, a ray of hope and pleasure gleamed brightly in his eye. "Ay there's the knowing dodge of it, that fire of the foresail was worth a Jew's eye to us. I saw when we were cutting down the foremast that the flames were creeping up the main-topmast and main-topgallant stays, but I was determined I wouldn't sing out till it was too late to save the spar. If them French frogs manage to jury-rig this dismasted hulk, and get her safe to port, why the devil take their luck, and I know nothing about the matter. The only chance that is left for us is some English cruiser coming along and picking us up before we get within shelter of the French coast. The wind is right off their shore as it stands at present; and if we don't get this lift from fortune, may I be rammed, crammed, and jammed in the north-west corner of a periwinkle-shell, if ever I christen a craft 'Prosperity' again."

"Lord, your honour, I never thought of that," exclaimed Spanker in delight, slapping his huge hand on his tarred canvas breeches, 'twill go devilish hard with us if we don't fall in with some English brig or frigate before that happens; so that after all we may manage to steer clear of their cursed French limboes. Just look, your honour, at them 'ere Frenchmen holding a council of war there on the starboard gangway, and moving their flippers up and down like so many pump-handles; they seem right regularly royally puzzled; but, halloa, what are they coming aft here for?"

As Spanker said this, the attention of the captain was drawn to the privateer's men, a deputation of whom came up to him, headed by their chief.

"Monsieur le Capitaine," said the latter, extending his little white delicate hand and grasping the huge brown flipper of Capt. Simpson, "Sare, I honour you, you are von vary determined enemy, it give me great satisfaction to meet von enemy like you, de chivalry of Europe still exist out of de world, while gentlemans like you command de commerce Anglais. I do repeat it give me great satisfaction to meet so brave an enemy."

"Rum taste you have, old boy," interrupted Spanker; "well, I'll say that for you any day o' the week and twice on Sundays."

"*Le combat*, Mons. le Capitaine, is over, you have accept parole, it is time our ordinary danger complete us into friends, your ship is de wreck, and from de signs of de veather the tempest is approach; how can we rig de little mast and make sail, in short what are we to do?"

"Do," replied Captain Simpson sullenly, yet not without a grin of great delight stealing over his rugged features, "you may do what you like, I've done all I can, and you see what's come of it; I can do

nothing for you but hand your name down below to a son of a sea-cook of an archbishop, who, with a pack of other landlubbers, has been busy all the action saying his prayers, he may do something for you on a pinch, tho' I can't say I found his sarvices of much use to me. As for myself I must go and see to my wounded, and if it had not been for my getting so flabbergasted by your boarding the craft, I ought to have attended to that long before. Come, Spanker, my boy, just stir your stumps and see how Jackson is getting on with his wounds. As for you, gentlemen," turning to the privateers, "you needn't be in any hurry in jury-rigging your prize; if you'll only wait long enough, no doubt one of the cruisers of the *grand* nation will pick you up and take you into port without any further trouble."

So saying, the captain rose from his seat, and, followed by Spanker, walked forward to see if any life yet remained in that descendant of an illustrious house, John Jackson.

"By the grand nation," said he to Spanker in an under tone as he walked along, "those half-starved devils think I mean their own country; but if there isn't a grander one in the little island over the way, and a devil of a sight more likelihood in our being picked up by a cruiser of our own, I'm out in my reckoning. Ah, here lies Jackson; poor bo', I'm afraid it's all up with him at last."

Taking the wounded seaman by the hand, and gazing sorrowfully in his face, Captain Simpson began calling loudly—

"Jackson! Jackson! my boy, look up!" Then, after a few seconds, he added, "Ah! I feared so!" scrubbing the corner of his eyes; "he's as dead as a red herring!"

"Poor fellow! sir," said Spanker, lifting up his head, which fell listlessly down on the booms where the corpse was lying. "Never mind, your honour; though he is gone, no sailor could have died with greater glory than in fighting twenty to one."

"That's the warst of it," replied the captain, "that's where I feels it! If that knock on the head had settled your hash, Spanker, I shouldn't have had no sort of compunction as it were: you man-of-war's men know that glory is a fair and regular commodity which all true seamen like to trade in with their life and limbs; but as for poor Jackson here," taking up the deceased's hand, while the rebellious tear fairly fell warm upon it,—"as for poor Jackson, he never had no sort of affection for glory or any of that kind of thing; and it's my solemn belief, Spanker, my boy, though I don't mean to say anything against him, mind you, but merely remark it to show what curious turns of mind there are in the world,—it's my belief that Jackson would have preferred getting into port with a jolly rich cargo, to all the glory that ever was made upon the sea. Howsomever, it's no use grieving; lend us a hand, and we'll carry him down below."

Accordingly, the two mourners bore into the fore-cabin the body of the deceased mate, and having gently laid it down out of the way, the captain decently arranged the limbs, and turning to his assistant—

"Spanker, my boy, go up upon the poop; you'll find our poor old bit of bunting there; I suppose those French vermin have hauled it down long ago: 'tis only fit that the poor boys who've been knocked on

the head in defending it, should have the satisfaction of being covered with its poor old union now that all 's over."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied Spanker; and darting away, he soon returned with the red English ensign.

"Did they make any objection to your having it, Spanker?"

"Who?—the enemy, sir?"

"Ay."

"Not a word, your honour; I rolled it up in as small a whiff as I could, and tucked it under my arm. They're as busy as the devil in a gale of wind trying to rig jury-masts; but, Lord, they'll be as long about it as some old nation was in the siege of Toulon, which, I hear, was ten years and a half."

"Come aft with me, Spanker, and bring the other two men that were shot; we'll put them all together, sew them up in one hammock, and bury the old ensign with them. I have no mind it shall meet with the dishonour of being kept by these fellows."

"Ay, do, do, sir; and no doubt our poor shipmates will find it very useful, when they come to be unpacked at Fiddler's Green, to save the trouble of any idle questions as to where they hail from."

While Spanker was yet expatiating on the great benefits to the dead hereby to be obtained, a violent scream from aft, and in a female voice, transfixed the attention of Captain Simpson.

"Why, Spanker, my boy, that's the women in the cabin, isn't it? Those Frenchmen can never be handling them roughly? Hang me if we stand that on any terms!"

"Sartainly not, sir."

"Stay a minute before you run aft. Here are a couple of loaded muskets—the best arguers, after all, that ever I heard tell of.

Snatching up the arms offered him, while Spanker himself did the same, the two seamen sprang on deck and rushed aft to the rescue.

On gaining the cabin, they found no more violent cause of alarm than a simple fainting-fit from Mrs. Archdeacon Pontifex, who, propped up by the French privateer captain on one side, and her husband's secretary on the other, was demonstrating the very great fear, produced in her sensitive mind by the issue of the conflict.

Having waited for a few minutes quiet spectators, and being convinced, from the courteous conduct of the Frenchman that their alarms had been groundless, the two Englishmen retired to complete the duties towards their own dead, leaving their polite victors in complete possession of the fair sex and the field.

The name of the French captain, who in the recent fight had proved by turns his determination, bravery, ill-fortune, and good-luck, was Monsieur Valette de la Passoa; and he clamed to be related, by descent, to a valiant knight of the order of St. John, rendered famous for his chivalric valour as displayed against the Turks in the siege of Malta.

Accustomed to reflect on this relationship with great complacency, and treasure up the memory of the valiant knight with the deepest veneration, the pride which he took in the chivalry of past ages happily induced him to frame his own conduct and manners on the same refining model.

Our friends, therefore, if doomed to be captured at all, were pecu-

liarly fortunate in falling into the hands of a victor who softened the harshness of a sea captain's character, with all the knightly courtesy of gentle birth and breeding of a decayed family; though long accustomed to the sea, in which pursuit he had formerly visited England and learned some of the language, he had, on the outbreak of the war, entered into partnership with some French merchant in the purchase and equipment of the vessel which had that morning been run down and foundered.

Though deeply annoyed and grieved at this loss, he could not find it in his heart to break through all the notions he had nursed from boyhood of knightly bearing to a fallen foe. Instead, therefore, of wreaking his revenge on the passengers and captain who had caused the wreck of all his hopes by the destruction of his ship, he seemed rather to entertain a due admiration of the skill and gallantry that had protracted such an unequal contest, and, in the kind estimation of a generous spirit, allowed the skipper and his sole surviving crew, Spanker and the wounded Sam, to remain at liberty; while to the female passengers he displayed as much attention and kindness as if he himself had been the captain instead of the captor of their vessel.

Than this nothing could have been more delightful to Mrs. Archdeacon Pontifex, who, making a violent effort to monopolise all Captain Passoa's attention, forgot at once her sea-sickness, her thousand woes, her capture—nay, almost even her husband's secretary, as she listened to the voluble compliments of the captain in his broken English, and pretended to understand the still more ardent expressions of his French conversation, of which she knew not one word.

As for the archdeacon, he seemed to take his capture as he did everything else, called it "an unfortunate event," and asked what they were likely to have for dinner.

For the first day everything went on very smoothly. Monsieur de Passoa and his crew exerted themselves to the utmost to rig jury-masts, but made so slight a progress in the labour, that when night closed in, a miserable apology for a foresail was all the canvas they were able to show to the gale, which, rapidly rising, drove, as a natural consequence, the heavy and dismasted merchantman two feet to leeward for every one that she advanced. During the whole of the ensuing night, therefore, the helpless Prosperity was pitched and tossed and heaved about in the most merciless manner. As day broke, a strong gale set in from the south-west, the sea rising with every passing hour. When the new captain looked around him on the shattered hull that his own shot had so seriously injured—when he contemplated the paltry and ridiculous show of canvas which barely sufficed to make the vessel steer, the long distance betwixt him and any friendly port, the chances of encountering some British cruiser, and contrasted all these horrors with the beautiful and swift-sailing privateer, so ample in her accommodation, and in the ease with which she was managed, so much more like the mistress of the elements than the sport of them, he certainly cursed with a bitterness of spirit the ill-fated attack which had given him so miserable an exchange. But a Frenchman's grief is rarely very deep; and this is one of the most sensible parts of their national character.

"It might have been worse," said he, "when that sea Hercules struck me off the bowsprit—it was ten thousand chances to one I should be fortunate enough to find a rope hanging overboard from the fore-chains, and so find my way on board again. Bad as this is," looking round him, and shrugging up his shoulders, "that would have been still less desirable;" and M. de Passoa cast his eyes over the shattered bulwark of the Prosperity, and looked down upon the dark blue surface of the sea, lashed into foam in every direction by the rising gale as it sighed and moaned along the heaving ridges of the ocean. How different was this morning from that which broke as yesterday upon his vessel in all the pride of pursuit and successful triumph! Now not a single spot of blue was to be seen in the whole firmament! A dark mass of lurid clouds arched over the threatening scene, and formed a dull and solemn canopy, the individual portions of which scudded fast and furiously along, hanging so near the water, that at a little distance they seemed to mingle with the spray.

Urgently as their captain stimulated his men on to complete the jury-rigging of the ship, the French privateers, possessed as little of the chivalrous feeling as of the knightly descent of the captain; they felt only the disasters of their situation, and full of sulky anger at the enemy, who had reduced them to it, and now strenuously persisted in a refusal of any assistance,—regarded with anger and jealousy their own captain's forbearance to his prisoners, and working against their will and with a disheartened mind, seemed likely to be quite as long in achieving their task as Captain Simpson had predicted. With his own men, therefore, M. de Passoa's difficulty chiefly rested; and while contending against their faint-heartedness, which made him fully alive to the difficulty of his situation, the female steward was sent up with a message to him, that the ladies below were utterly expiring for want of his assistance. The gallant soul of the knightly Frenchman was deeply touched on such an emergency; and, without too minutely weighing its probability, he gave the necessary orders to his second in command, and leaving in his hands the task of refitting and re-rigging the ship, descended below, to rescue the fair inhabitants of the cabin from their imminent peril.

Great was his mortification, therefore, to find that this alarming message had chiefly originated in the extremities of Mrs. Archdeacon Pontifex, who, though a very charming woman in herself, yielded, in the Frenchman's eyes, to the more charming beauties of her governess, Nora,—which Mrs. Archdeacon perceiving, with all the swift intuition of a woman, did not fail to reward with a due portion of her hate accordingly.

As, however, all the ladies were excessively frightened with the motion of the ship and the violence of the gale, and, from a false notion that they were foundering, had all dressed themselves and quitted their berths, the good-natured captain agreed to change the plans which he had already formed, and renouncing his fears of the English cruisers, put before the wind, and so made for the French and English channel. This, he assured them, would lessen the motion of the ship to such a degree as to prove the needlessness of their alarm; while, partly with the view of cheating them of their fears, he ordered his own cook, who had been one of the fortunate few to escape from the sinking

privateer, to assist the steward of the Prosperity in preparing the best breakfast that the stock of the merchantman would allow,—promising the ladies that after this was despatched, he would beguile their time by telling them some interesting story, which should cause the forgetfulness of all surrounding horrors.

Whether he had previously entertained a design of making for the Spanish coast, or whether he had simply acted from a dread of meeting the British cruisers off Ushant, we know not; but he now ordered his second in command to put the helm up and steer in the direction of Brest, when immediately the labouring merchant vessel, being put dead before the gale, rolled on as merrily as if she herself felt a release from the straining to which she was before subject, and, joyous at once more turning her bow homewards, rushed impetuously forward to the goal of her destiny. The only danger now to be apprehended was that of being pooped; but having shut in all the dead-lights astern, and taken every other precaution to guard against this disaster, the captain was enabled to send a great portion of his crew below to splice the main brace, and to give orders that they should not be hurried or distressed in the erection of other jury-masts, as the sail they had already set was, under the gale then blowing, quite sufficient to speed them onward.

The hopes, too, of speedily finding themselves once more in "la belle France," contributed greatly to the joy of the crew, and with the satisfaction of having contributed to the pleasure both of his seamen and his fair passengers, the gallant captain descended to the admirable breakfast which his cook had prepared for him, determined to enjoy to the utmost those pleasures which seemed so happily thrown in his way.

As soon as the ladies felt the increased ease of the ship's motion, nothing could be stronger than their demonstrations of gratitude towards the captain; and after enjoying the breakfast which he had so judiciously ordered, the little party drew round the stove in the cabin—and while the excluded daylight was compensated for by an additional display of candles, he redeemed his promise of passing away the heavy hours by the narration of the following story.

As M. de Passoa had passed nearly two years of his life in England previously to the outbreak of the war, he now, for the greater amusement of all present, exerted himself to the utmost to deliver his narrative in the language of those he addressed. We will not, however, trouble our readers with the captain's broken English, and therefore venture to free his tale from these little inaccuracies, and present it in the following form.

## THE SANGIACK OF BOSNIA:

OR,

MY ANCESTOR'S GOLDEN SPURS.

As in moments like the present, when adversity seems pressing hard upon each retreating footstep, and danger threatens us in front wherever we may turn, no story can be more advantageous than one which shows

how others have triumphed over greater difficulties, I shall, with the consent of my audience, take leave to narrate a passage in the life of one of my ancestors which has been duly handed down in the chronicles of our family.

It was in the month of August, in the year 1565, that the order of St. John of Jerusalem stood in as deadly peril as had ever threatened it since its first institution.

Driven, after various vicissitudes, to take refuge in the island of Malta, they had strongly fortified this post by every means and ingenuity which their resources would allow. A reprisal on the Ottoman Porte, of more than ordinary severity, had caused Solyman the Magnificent to swear by his beard that he would extirpate the order of St. John.

A mighty armament, equipped with everything deemed necessary to success, descended upon the island of Malta; and after some of the most bloody conflicts recorded in history, succeeded in storming one of the chief fortresses in the island; and had now invested, for some time, the Bourg, or chief city—one of the greatest protections of which was the fortress of St. Michael.

Weeks had been passed in the attempted reduction of this fort. All the resources of the Ottoman army had been employed against it; the utmost ingenuity had been displayed on either side, both in attacking and defending; blood had been poured out with the profusion of water, and valour had exceeded in its prodigies all that the imagination could picture to itself of daring.

A most extensive breach having been effected by the thunder of the Turkish cannon on the walls of St. Michael, day after day the fiercest assaults had been made by the flower of the Osmanli; and each succeeding night closed on the bloody struggle, shedding the dews of heaven upon a deep fosse, trodden full of Turkish corses, and bringing to the besiegers no other consolation than the sacrifice of so many Christian knights to their enemies' sanguinary hatred and revenge.

At length, however, on the 20th of August, a desperate effort was to be made by the Turks. Leader after leader had been foiled in the attempt to get possession of the coveted post; and now one of the most renowned and venerable chiefs of the Ottoman host had sworn to carry it or perish in the attempt.

The night of the 19th set in, as calmly and as beautifully as if no deed of violence were either contemplated or likely.

Within the vast circle, irradiated by a brilliant moon, the light fell softly and holily on the venerable ramparts, that threw their deep shadow on every side, across the various harbours of the port of Malta. Still the night-breeze whispered sweetly over those blue transparent waters, rich with the perfume of a thousand orange-trees, in the interior of the island, which the desolating hand of the barbarian had either been untempted to visit, or had mercifully forborne to lay waste; still the thousands of bells of the Catholic city of the Bourg rose with a sacred appeal to Heaven, and fell with a hallowed melody upon the ear of the listener.

Thus far at least all was as it had been a few brief months before, when, unthreatened by the horrid tide of war, which had since floated

their ramparts with blood, the peaceful citizens and high-born luxurious knights mingled pleasure and delight with the fiercer duties of the pursuit of arms. No longer the light and gondola-looking boat shot from the deep shadow of the creek, bearing some young lover to his mistress, or illustrious warrior to the halls of feasting and pleasure. The calm waters of the harbour no longer bore upon their bosom the resonant sound of the guitar, and the light cheerful voice of the love-inspiring serenader:—the sharp quick blow of the hammer rattling on the anvil, as it repaired the broken cuirass or the unriveted helmet, or forged afresh the blunted javelin; the dull ringing sound of the pick-axe and the matlock wearily labouring to repair the breach or to remove the dead; the smothered whispers of knights and men-at-arms, who, though fighting throughout the whole of the oppressive heat of the summer's day, still had to toil and watch throughout the greater part of the night; these were the only sounds that rose from the closely-leaguered city; while, if a solitary boat shot out across the waters to keep up the communication with some distant post, it was instantly made the mark of fifty arquebusses from the vigilant Turks, who kept the sternest watch over every movement of the besieged—while, if these were not successful in sinking the unhappy skiffs, a blaze of light illuminated the whole bay, displaying every fortress in the clearest outline, while the thunder of artillery shook them to their solid bases, and three or four culverins, carrying balls of seventy or eighty pounds apiece, as well as loaded with stones, glass, and broken earth, dashed with their deadly shower the unhappy bark from the surface of the sea.

This project defeated, a keen eye might have discovered soon after a round black speck upon the waters, emerging from the same part from which the boat had started, and where now one of the expert Maltese divers swam, with a letter hermetically enclosed in a tiny case of lead, and held in the swimmer's mouth, ready to be irrecoverably sunk the moment that capture became likely; but every sound of former revelry or joy seemed banished.

Seven hundred knights, at the beginning of the siege, had solemnly sworn, at the high altar of their faith, with all the gorgeous ceremonials of the Roman Catholic creed, and beneath the folds of the consecrated standard of their order, to pour forth each warm drop of their heart's blood rather than allow the crescent of the enemy to wave in triumph above the holy symbol of their hopes, that had led them over a thousand fields of victory.

Already one half of this devoted band, who had here partaken of the Eucharist under such solemn circumstances, had met the glorious martyrdom to which their oaths, their duties, and the base cold-hearted indifference of Europe, had devoted them; while a similar fate had long been closely hovering over, and seemed now about to fall upon, the heads of their surviving brothers.

Such, then, on the night of the 20th of August, were the sounds and appearances of the Christian camp; while, on the side of the sanguinary assailants, the exultation of forthcoming victory, and the brutal triumph of superior forces, seemed to buoy them up with all the

inflated arrogance and cruelty which have ever shaded the few bright virtues of truth and valour redeeming the otherwise dark character of the followers of Mahomet. On one side of the harbour stood the Bourg and fortresses of St. Michael and St. Angelo; while on the other were the ruins of the fortress of St. Elmo, now possessed and held by the Turks, who, after expending before it the bravest of their army, had at the last hour become possessed of this battered mausoleum of its brave defenders, the last of whom was struck dead in the breaches, as the victorious tide of the Othman battle rolled home on its glacis. Along the whole line of this coast extended the encampment of the Turkish army.

The distant lights were seen from afar, dotting in distinct outline the position which they held; while the low indistinct hum of a mighty multitude was borne over the intervening bay, mingled with occasional bursts of the barbarous horn and deep-resounding gong, where some scattered parties of the warlike barbarians indulged in anticipated triumph over the chivalry of the Cross.

Far different, however, were the feelings entertained by the leader of the host. Alone in his gorgeous tent, and surrounded by the favourites of his seraglio, their snowy arms encircled him in vain. Untouched by their caresses, he seemed not to perceive the large full eye of the fair Georgian beside him, but, intently poring on a plan of the fortification that had so long resisted his valour, he moodily pondered on some fresh device by which to gain the object of his Sultan, and render somewhat more safe the head which now began to sit too loosely on his shoulders.

Midnight came, and the knights having done their utmost to refortify the extensive breach, retired to take a few hours' repose in their iron panoply; while other brothers of the order, who had hastily snatched a few hours of the same refreshment, succeeded in their vigils, and guarded against any surprise from the desperate enemy. As the night veered into morning, the dawn began to break in the east at three o'clock; and soon after four, the sun was already above the horizon.

From that hour down to six, the threatened inhabitants of the Bourg began to swarm towards the church, there to join in the grand mass offered up by their defenders, the warrior monks of the order, and their sons and brothers, serving in the ranks beneath them, hundreds of whom, before another day could dawn, would have passed from the breach of their ramparts into the presence of their God.

It was a noble and thrilling spectacle to behold the strong beams of the early sun, as it streamed through the stained oriel window, falling in bright and variegated colour upon the crowd of armed men prostrate before the altar.

As the sudden peal of the anthem burst forth through the lofty dome, the clang of armour on the pavement rang out a solemn accompaniment to the sacred music. Cuirasses, helmets, and swords, that had descended from one generation to another, and been baptized in endless victories over the same pagan enemy, here threw back the hallowed light of heaven for the last time before rushing into all the horrors of

fire and carnage. Not a man of the dense multitude, old or young, but bore about him the weapons of slaughter or defence; while crowds of lovely women, closely veiled and habited in the deepest mourning, importuned Heaven to protect those so dear to them, and on whose efforts alone they relied for protection from the rapine and fury of a foe that never yet spared age nor sex.

The last note of the stirring music ceased,—the final chant of the service died away; and in a few seconds the warlike worshippers of that gorgeous fane, shrived from all wordly taint, marshalled on the ramparts round the banner of the Cross. Hour after hour now elapsed, during which the expected assault was eagerly looked for. The sounds of preparation were distinctly audible from the camp of the enemy.

At length, as the chimes of the Bourg cathedral struck nine o'clock, a loud and pealing burst of the barbarous horns of the Turks, and the still more noisy accompaniment of the cymbal and the gong, gave notice that the storming party had begun its march.

Directly opposite to the yawning breach was the point of the Coradin hill. Round this suddenly swept a stream of Turkish galleys filled with troops, whose gorgeous dresses, green white and crimson turbans, gold brocades, and glittering cimeters, formed a sight equally dazzling and solemn to behold. In the midst of this party was a galley bearing the standard of one of the Ottoman chiefs, and filled with the band whose proud and stirring but unmelodious music sounded a note of stern defiance to their mailed antagonists, and stimulated the worshippers of the Crescent to refil with their swarming bodies those fosses which had been so often piled with their dead.

"See, young Passoa," cried the Chevalier La Cerda to my ancestor, "the head of the land column now begins to show itself;" and, quickly advancing round the rocky shore that lined the bay, appeared the main body of the storming party, led on by the grey-haired chief, the Sangiack of Bosnia. Even at that distance the bright beams of the sun, in the deliciously clear atmosphere of Malta, enabled the expectant knights on the ramparts to have the most distinct view of his person.

"Surely that cannot be the Pasha Mustapha!" said the veteran Mendoza de Riez.

"No," rejoined the other, "it cannot be the Pasha. Mustapha is a younger man."

"Surely," said a third, "this must be some new chieftain who has joined the enemy. I can see his long silver beard floating in the morning breeze as he gallops forward on his light Arab."

"'Tis a pagan of some rank," said young Passoa; "his dress is covered with crimson and gold, and his standard-bearer rides beside him at the head of the column. 'Tis a noble-looking infidel, be who he may, and, I warrant me, has returned from many a bloody field to lead on this assault to-day: he never shall lead on another, and if I gild not my spurs in his heart's blood, his followers may have mine."

"Ay, youngster, it's time you won your spurs," said Mendoza to the ambitious stripling, who only, as yet, performed the office of page to the Grand Master. "I've seen you flesh your maiden sword in the battle

right gallantly on many a day before this. Methinks the Grand Master might safely dub you on bended knee."

"And so he would, long ago, only it takes so much to win a pair of spurs in days like these, when every man in the order, knight, squire, or man-at-arms, achieves deeds that might do honour to a hero."

"Well said, my boy," cried two or three surrounding veterans, grimly smiling through their half-raised visors. "See how gallantly that old pagan advances to the storm; I suppose, before he gains the foot of the breach, he'll give way to some younger leader. See! look at him now, as he flashes his cimeter in the sun, and waves on the desperate Spahis. Hark! there is the Janissary's war-cry answering back Allah, il Allah! Allah, hu! By the Virgin! what a forest of steel glitters above their turbaned heads! Some ruddy fruit will fall from its branches before the sea-breeze sets in to-day."

"Yes," cried Passoa, "I shall try if I can't knock down a few of their pomegranates for my own private enjoyment," affectionately slapping the short musketoon. Ah! see, still the old Turk comes prancing on. Now his banner flutters out fairly to the wind, but, as usual, it is a mere mass of crimson stars and crescents. A man might almost as well carry an orrery at once over his head."

"Ha!" interrupted Don John Pereira, "here comes the imperial Lascaris; now we shall know who is this grim Osmanli."

As the Spanish veteran turned round, he addressed himself to a tall Christian of noble and commanding figure, the descendant of the Palæologi, the last emperors of Constantinople before that city was taken by the Turks. Made captive when a child, the ruthless barbarians, with that love of long descent which marks their character, respected the imperial blood of young Lascaris, brought him up to the profession of arms, and on the landing of the Turkish army to exterminate the order of St. John, entrusted him with the distinguished command of the Spahi corps; but the blood of the Christian flowed uneasily beneath the turban of Mahomet.

Touched by the heroic devotion with which the garrison of St. Elmo sacrificed themselves, one by one, in support of their holy cause, Lascaris foreswore the religion of the prophet, and embracing the creed and cause of his ancestors, went over to the Grand Master with important intelligence of the enemy's movements, and all the assistance which an able mind, a strong arm, and undoubted valour, could afford. Educated amongst them, of course he knew personally every leader of distinction of the Ottoman host; and on this memorable day, no sooner presented himself on the ramparts, glistening in one of the most gorgeous suits of mail which the armoury of the order could furnish, and which, together with a pension which had been bestowed on him by the Grand Master as a reward of his services, than twenty voices of his brother knights eagerly demanded of Lascaris, who was the venerable leader of the assaulting column—"Who is he?"

"I should know that snow-white beard that waves so majestically in the morning breeze. It is too old for the Pasha Mustapha, and too venerable for the dark Piali."

"Look at his pennon, Lascaris," said Passoa; "surely you can tell him by his standard, that he seems to take such a pride in. It is streaming out as proudly now as if, an hour hence, it was not to be dabbled in its master's blood, and trodden under foot by the humblest Turcoman in his column."

"His standard, Passoa? Ay, right, I see now who it is: there is not a more distinguished chief in the whole Turkish camp. It is no less a leader than Cheder, the Sangiack of Bosnia. You may well say his pennon will be dripping with its master's blood before it is trodden under foot by his soldiers; and never will that fate happen to it while life is left in the Sangiack."

"Ha! is he such a dreadful Turk, then?" said the commander of Bonne Seigne, who, though fearfully wounded in the face in the assault of the previous day, not only insisted on bearing his share in the honours of the succeeding morning, but continued, as was his constant wont, that love of jest and merriment in the face of the extremest danger, which has so powerful an effect in keeping up the spirits of the surrounding soldiers.

"You may well call him terrible," returned Lascaris: "it is his favourite boast that there is not a hair in his grey beard which cannot count a separate battle, nor a battle thus counted that was not a victory."

"His beard must be a terrible liar," said some laughing voice issuing from the closed visor of a knight behind, "if it has seen any of our battles since the Turks landed at Malta." A general laugh at this sally burst forth, and several of the knights turned to see who had been the impugner of the Turk's white beard: as their eyes, however, fell upon the speaker, the merriment came to an abrupt conclusion—the jester was the Spanish knight La Cerda. Panic-stricken at the beginning of the war, when second in command over the garrison of St. Elmo, he had imprudently announced in public that a week's siege was the utmost that fortress could stand. Severely reprehended for thus giving way to despair, he had increased his first offence ten-thousandfold, by making a slight flesh-wound a pretext for forsaking that post of danger and renown.

Abhorring conduct so pusillanimous, his brother knights had thenceforth determined to hold no sort of communication with one who had thus tarnished the honour of the order; and even in the fierce struggle of the battle, and "imminent danger of the deadly breach," thus turned a cold shoulder to the unhappy and repentant knight, and held forth a terrible example both to men and leaders of the punishment that followed faults of such a nature.

When La Cerda perceived that not all the valour he had recently displayed against the foe could redeem his former indiscretion, he drew sadly back from the crowd of high-born and haughty chivalry around him, and leaning against the battered fragments of the breach, began to reflect that he had lived too long.

"But the remedy is approaching," muttered he; "it shall not be again neglected;" and grasping with his mailed hand the steel pommel of his sword, and fixing on the advancing pagan host eyes that in their agony and shame could no longer restrain their tears, prayed impatiently

for the moment when he should offer up the last atonement of his fault by a sacrifice of that life, the too great love of which had ruined him.

"Artillerymen, are you ready with your cannon?" was now heard in the commanding tones of Cencio Gasconi, a knight of long experience and the most tried valour, who had recently been appointed to the command of the spur of St. Michael.

"All ready, sir," cried the cannoneers, who had been restrained with difficulty up to this moment from pouring in their destructive fire upon the thick column of the advancing Turks. With commendable prudence, however, Gasconi insisted that not a shot should be fired until the forces, both by land and water, had approached within twenty yards of the foot of the breach.

"Now, my men," continued the wary Cencio, hastening from gun to gun, "be cool; and if you see the Turks' turbans close to the mouths of your pieces, so much the better. What are you all loaded with?"

"Round shot, musket-balls, and broken iron, sir," replied the cannoneers, quickly answering the question of the leader whom all so much admired.

"That's well, my brothers: you on the westernmost bastion, stand by to pour down your fire on the Turkish galleys; we on the eastern platform will care for the landward column. Not a man of you, if he values his honour, will fire again till I give the word; meanwhile, to save time, train and point to the utmost nicety you can. By St. Michael himself, Pereira, but that is a well-born infidel with his white beard! see if he rides not to the very foot of the breach: ask Lascaris there who he is."

"Cheder, the Sangiack of Bosnia," replied Pereira, looking up to the rampart overhead at Gasconi, who, with his sword drawn and visor down, stood looking the very image of valour and manly beauty, as his gay plumes fluttered joyously in the morning breeze, and the bright steel of his shield and helmet mirrored back the sun's rays with dazzling brightness. Over the glorious and warlike cuirass beneath was donned the white surcoat of spotless purity, bearing on it the blood-red cross which so many noble spirits had died to uphold.

"By my spurs! Pereira," replied Gasconi, "he'll sleep on a harder bed to-night than he calculated—ay, than has pillowed him for some years past, if he comes on at that rate."

"Nay, Gasconi, you forget the immortal houris," quoth Pereira, jeering at the Moslem creed; "but surely he never intends to lead the storm himself?"

"Ay, but he does though, Pereira; for see yonder he leaps from his Arab steed to mount the breach on foot, and, by my halidom! if he be not kissing the dumb brute before he gives him his liberty. Look, Pereira, what enthusiasm that simple act of Arab affection has excited among the iron-breasted janissaries—see how they wave their wilderness of cimeters! Hark! there goes to heaven their battle-cry! How it runs from rank to rank like lightning through the sky!"

"Ay, and the thunder of its voice, Gasconi, peals well along our rocky shores."

"A deeper thunder shall salute them soon, Pereira."

"Knights and gentlemen in the breach, fall back! Back to your posts!—visors down—the enemy are about to fire. No true friend of the Cross exposes unnecessarily the life that is its property. Gunners on the eastern bastion, 'fire!'"

At this command, a dense volume of smoke burst forth upon the ramparts and obscured the sea, followed by a noise like the loudest thunder, amid which could be plainly distinguishsd the rushing of the shot and the various deadly missiles with which the guns were charged. As this fearful storm descended on the dark blue waters of the scarcely ruffled bay, a large field of foam seemed ploughed up all around the boats of the Turkish galleys; splinters of wood, glittering fragments of broken steel and arms, long streaming tatters of red and white turbans, and still more gorgeous vestments—confused and disjointed images of the human form, and a wide-spreading purple tide of gore upon the sparkling foam, all announced the terrific havoc which the well-planned volley of Gasconi's cannoneers made.

"Bravely done—bravely fired, my brothers of the Cross!" shouted in cheering accents the stately Cencio, as he waved aloft his straight crossed-handled sword, which, catching the sun's rays through the dense column of smoke, gleamed forth as ruddily as if that too had shared in the general slaughter.

"God and St. John!" was the fierce cry of triumph raised by the Christians as they beheld nearly one half of the Turkish galleys sink beneath the wave.

"Allah il Allah!" fiercely shouted the remainder of the brave party, whilst a fresh burst of their cymbals, horns, and gongs, returned a fierce defiance which not even death itself could silence.

On they rushed, still steering to the foot of the breach, waving aloft their cimeters, and urging to the utmost speed the eager rowers with cries and screams of vehemence which more denoted the rage of the sanguinary brute, than the cool commanding courage of the disciplined soldier.

"Gunners on the western rampart," cried Gasconi, who had been carefully watching the advancing column, against which his cannon were levelled, "are you all ready?"

"All ready."

"Be cool in your aim and fire." Once more the flash of light rivalled the glorious luminary of day; once more the thunder of artillery rattled along those rocky shores, now so familiar with its iron voice; once more the sulphureous curtain rose rapidly up to the pure heaven, and threw a deadly eclipse on the storming party of the furious Turcoman. As the arrows of death fell on the devoted host, you could see the dense column stagger back beneath the fearful shock, while the measured sound of their march was stayed; and so close were the men, that cries of human agony filled up the pause, and for a moment drowned even the discordant jarring of their Eastern music.

"Nobly aimed, my soldiers of the Cross; load and fire as fast as you can," cried Gasconi, exulting in the effect his men had produced,

and cheering them on to renewed efforts in the cause so dear at heart.

"Inshallah! Inshallah!" cried the Sangiack, turning round to his men, and flourishing his cimeter above his emir's turban, where, amid all the carnage of the fight, distinctly glistened a gorgeous jewel, and leaping on the first stones of the shattered breach, he rushed impetuously forward with the port of a lion and the fury of a tigress. Shamed to be outdone by an aged veteran, the silvery honours of whose beard might have proclaimed him their grandsire as well as chief, and which were already spotted by his own blood from a slight bullet-graze on his cheek, the Spahis and Janissaries vied with each other in rushing on to throw the shield of their bodies between their dauntless chief and the terrific fire of the Christian breach; but by that same silver beard the Sangiack had sworn to carry the post of St. Michael or perish in the attempt. With all a Turk's usual veneration for his oath, his only effort now seemed to be the fulfilment of the former part of his adjuration, and the utter scorn of the latter.

The shouts and the fire of the Christian line, and more than all the close contemplation of that sacred symbol which it was his creed to hate and to deny, not only seemed to goad the fiery soul of the chieftain into madness, but to restore to his aged limbs the very spring and summer of their pride.

Fiercely and fastly as the Janissaries ran, or rather flew before him, up the rugged ruins of the breach, the Sangiack, with still fleeter foot, defying the awkward encumbrances of his Turkish dress, still strode on their right hand before them, now waving his sword and shouting to his followers to come on, now turning to his favourite standard-bearer, and ordering him to keep well displayed the gorgeous pennon that had shone over so many ruddy fields, and which, by his extraordinary care of it, he seemed to consider a perfect talisman of victory.

By this time these two, the Sangiack and his officer, had become an object of mark to every man on the ramparts; a close and deadly fire was poured from every quarter, but a more especially murderous aim was devoted to this hapless pair than any others in the column of assault beside.

"Pick them down! pick them down! my boys," cried one to another, as one musketoon after another was discharged at them in their advance.

"There goes the standard-bearer!" cried the exulting young Passoa, who, scrambling up to a commanding eminence, had taken a steady and undisturbed aim at the unfortunate subaltern, and at the first fire had sent a ball through his brain. Springing wildly in the air as the bullet struck him, he fell headlong down the steep ruins of the shattered wall, now slippery with the blood that dyed it, and bearing with him the standard which had been the conspicuous cause of his slaughter. In an instant the eagle-eye of the indomitable chief caught sight of the calamity which had happened, and without bestowing a look upon the unfortunate officer who had thus fallen dead at his feet, he darted forward in time to snatch from his powerless grasp the falling ensign, and thus rescue its consecrated folds from the profanation of the gore-stained dust.

In an instant, defying all the danger of the office, half-a-dozen daring young officers from the Spahi's corps rushed forward to contest the dangerous honour of filling the death vacancy. Resigning the gilded and embossed staff into the first hand that made good its claim, by a quick support, the determined Sangiack gathered up the loose folds of his robes, drew from his belt a gorgeously-mounted pistol, discharged it on the quarter from whence the death-shot seemed to have come, and then, in his rage, hurling the discharged weapon in the faces of the foe, repeated his ceaseless shout of "Allah hu!" and again rushed forward.

"Down with them again! my brothers, down with them!" replied Gasconi, himself laying on the ramparts before him the naked sword that was not at present available, and seizing a spare musketoon and levelling its barrel at the formidable Sangiack.

"Down with the standard-bearer again!" re-echoed La Roche Pereira, the younger brother of Don John, adding, "Spare the old man his life in honour of his grey hairs!"

"Who talks of sparing!" fiercely and loudly cried Gasconi; "did they spare St. Elmo?"

The loud and terrific shout of vengeance that cried "No," on every side, seemed to bring to the memory of the heated Christians a full remembrance of the sanguinary outrages there perpetrated by the Turks: the darkest and strongest passion of revenge involuntarily flashed through every bosom as this dark and saddening recollection came across them.

"Down with them! down with them!" was the savage shout on every side, and fast and thick were the shots poured into the Turkish host, in hopes of bringing down the leader, who had gained within a few paces of the Christians' spears; again and again the dangerous post of standard-bearer was vacated by the hand of death, and still again rushed forward unnumbered candidates for the distinguished but fatal honour.

Still the Sangiack himself seemed to bear a charmed life; still the balls flew round him like hail in a wintry storm, and the best and bravest of his band rolled lifeless beneath his feet, or fell mortally wounded at his side. Regardless of all but the oath he had taken and the post he was to win, the grey-bearded warrior still toiled up the broken, tumbling, and slippery breach, and showed in the deadly van the green Hajee turban that had bowed at the shrine of the Prophet, the costly jewel that glittered in its folds, and the gorgeous vestments with which the proud and valorous barbarian had decked himself. After an incredible slaughter, the summit of the breach was at length gained; his fierce and ruthless warriors swarmed after him, cheered by his voice, and emulating his example.

"Can none of us strike down that old grey-bearded hyæna?" cried the vexed Gasconi, who had taken four separate shots at the Turkish leader. Once more levelling his piece, the commander of St. Michael took a deliberate aim, and again fired. The active Cheder sprang forward, however, at the very moment when Cencio's finger touched

the trigger, and thus disclosing the person of his seventh standard-bearer, who had allowed himself to get a little in the rear of his leader, the latter received in his neck the ball intended for his chief, and he too was numbered with the slain.

The well-contested pennon now, for the first time, fell fairly to the ground; in the hurry and fury of the moment, several of the unhallowed feet of the Janissaries were planted upon the sacred symbol, which the Imaum himself had blessed, and the air of Mecca had before this displayed and sanctified.

On the first moment that the governor of Bosnia turned round, his quick glance detected the absence of his trophy, and looking down upon the ground, there, to his rage and horror, lay the dishonoured silk, torn, tattered, blood-stained, and defiled. With a cry of fury he flew on the foremost men, whose feet were yet trampling upon the object of his reverence, and beating them back with the flat part of his cimeter, and pouring upon them, with a Turk's vehemence, all the objurgations that the act suggested to his mind, he once more raised aloft the fallen standard of his house, and turning toward the wearied host that followed him, shook it wildly in the air. The din of the firing and the confusion of the *mêlée* did not allow the Christians to distinguish whether he uttered anything more than his usual war-cry; but this was observable to all,—no eager hand sprang forward now to claim the dangerous honour that had proved fatal to so many; and, whether this arose from any exclamation that the Sangiack himself might have made, or whether all the officers of the necessary rank around him had been slain, or whether this hesitation arose from witnessing the dangerous nature of the post, it is now as idle as bootless to inquire. Still retaining in his left hand the decorated staff that had marshalled so many to the shades below, the Sangiack, with the name of Allah resounding fiercely on his lips, rushed forward over the last impediment, and stood the very first within the deadly circle of St. Michael's breach.

In an instant a dozen knights, the flower of the Christian chivalry, rushed forward to have the honour of crossing arms in deadly conflict with so distinguished a foe.

Watchful of the moment, Cencio Gasconi was at their head—already his shield was advanced to guard; his glittering sword was raised to strike a deadly blow, when a voice of youthful triumph was heard to shout from the adjoining rampart, "Now for my golden spurs, Gasconi."

The sharp report of a musketoon added its voice to the general roar, and as its discharge blazed upon the eyes of those around, the silvered countenance of the fierce but venerable Sangiack bleached to a deadly palor; his firm and agile step faltered upon the blood-stained ruins; the hand that grasped his cherished standard relaxed its hold; and the ensign of honour, and the aged hero over whose well-scarred and fearless bosom it had so often and so victoriously fluttered, now rolled together, alike insensible to the storm that raged around them, and the defeat which it had brought.

## CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

THE SANGIACK OF BOSNIA CONCLUDED—THE BLOW SO FATAL TO THE TURKS, SO GLORIOUS TO THE CHRISTIANS, HAD BEEN STRUCK AT LAST.

A BALL from the Chevalier Passoa had penetrated the sacred turban and costly calpac of the ill-starred Chedar, and while it speeded, according to the Mahometan belief, the soul of the dead hero to the arms of the immortal houris, it richly earned for the living the knightly reward for which he had so long sought.

No sooner was the aged Mussulman seen to fall, than on every side arose the Christian cry, "The Sangiack's slain! the Sangiack's slain!" while amid the Turkish ranks the intelligence flew with equal rapidity and an opposite effect.

Springing quickly forward to the place where the corpse still lay, the choicest band of the Osmanli now contested with the feeble number of the besieged the possession of the Sangiack's remains.

While on the little spot formed by the breach of St. Michael's, this sanguinary struggle had taken place, the deepest interest in the result was equally shared by the knights posted at the other parts of the garrison, as well as by the rest of the Turkish army, who still remained to guard their camp, in the various positions of which they had succeeded in gaining possession.

On the moment that the batteries of St. Michael opened their deadly fire, this discharge was received by the garrison of St. Angelo as a signal to contribute their assistance; and, accordingly, from the vast height of that impregnable rock, the numerous heavy guns of the besiegers opened upon the Turkish column, as it filed onward to the breach.

In order, however, to reach the ranks of the latter, the engineers were obliged to direct all their fire over the fortification and houses included within the lines of St. Michael, while, with a view of confusing the Christians, and adding to the spirit of their own men, the Turks also opened their batteries along the whole line of coast, from the Hill of Coradin on one side of the bay, to Fort St. Elmo on the other.

These, in their turn, in order to reach the Christians on the ramparts of St. Michael, were obliged to direct their shot over the heads of their own besieging party, who were clambering up the breach from below.

To all those horrors of the fight then which we have described, were added the unceasing roar of the numerous artillery thus brought into play.

The hurtling of the shot overhead, both from friend and foe, resembled the rushing of a mighty tempest through a forest, while the perpetual din resounding from the rocky surface on every side, scarcely allowed the human voice, or even individual shots, to be heard.

Heavy as were the calibres of English guns, they sunk into insignificance before the enormous bulk and portance of the Turkish cannon: stones of one hundred and eighty, two, three, and even seven hundred pounds, came whizzing through the air with frightful noise and vehe-

mence, seeming like little planets as they rushed along the sky, sometimes splitting in pieces before they fell, and shaking, to its foundations, the solid ramparts, against which they struck and splintered into a thousand pieces.

The news of the Sangiack's death seemed to spread like lightning through the attacking column; and forgetful of the rude discipline they had hitherto maintained, the Turks rushed on with cries of baffled fury and rage, as though, by the mere dint of superior numbers, they could force from the breach those who had sworn to pave it with their corses, rather than let the crescent pass in triumph over it.

Furiously as the Turks poured forward, countlessly as they swarmed on every side, they found an impenetrable forest of swords and lances; and behind these, bosoms as stern as the steel that guarded them.

Still more hotly than ever the engineers plied their tasks on the batteries, encouraged from the rear by the cheers of their wives and daughters, who, nobly sacrificing all personal fears and danger, bore, at the risk of their lives, fresh stores of ammunition for the blazing cannon, and refreshments for the wounded and exhausted soldiers.

Noon arrived, and the burning sun of August shot down its fiercest fire upon the combatants. Yet there the Turkish column wavered to and fro, sadly thinned by the Christian fire, and trampling under foot the dying and the dead, still resolutely bent upon annihilating, if possible, the defenders of the fortress, while the series of sanguinary contests that took place over the lifeless body of the Sangiack were accompanied with varying fortune.

Now the determined and heavy sword of Cencio Gasconi hewed down all before it; and striding over the mutilated corpse, kept at bay its desperate defenders. Now a sudden rush of the undulating column forced him bodily back from the position he had so daringly won, and compelled the besiegers to retire more within the shelter of their own breach. At length, however, the superior numbers of the Turks prevailed, pressed close home to their own walls, and the grisly barricade of pikes and swords there presented, the spahis succeeded in gaining the body of their lamented chief; and with this humble portion of triumph, the deadly tide of battle rolled back to the quarter whence it came with the deafening shouts and cheers of the victorious Christians.

The sun was now fast descending towards the west. The cannon, with renewed vigour, poured all their deadliest wrath upon the retreating enemy; and as the swelling trumpets of the knights pealed forth notes of triumph over the resounding bay, the venerable form of the grand master was seen advancing from the post, where he too had contributed his share to the Turkish rout.

"De Passoa," said the gallant and beloved old knight.

In an instant my ancestor was by his side.

"Kneel," said the dauntless head of the order; then raising his heavy cross-handled sword, still dripping with the pagan blood which it had drunk, he laid it on the shoulder of his page, with words which will ever be memorable while there exists one descendant.

"Never were the honours of St. John more fairly won upon a ruddier field; and as you have won your spurs, Passoa, you have the prayers and the confidence of your chief that so you will ever wear them."

## CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

### THE COURSE OF PROSPERITY RESUMED.

As the Frenchman concluded the story of his gallant ancestor, he looked round the circle of his auditory for that applause which was most readily granted; and, still inclined to draw a moral from his tale, remarked, "Take the worst at the worst, my friends. What are our present troubles to those that threatened the defenders of St. Michael? and yet they triumphed over all. For us we have nothing to complain of but—"

At this very moment of speaking, and while yet the worthy Frenchman was felicitating himself upon the comparative absence of danger, a sudden crash was heard on deck, as if the whole stern-frame of the Prosperity was about to be beaten into the cabin where our friends were sitting. Nor was the noise without its accompaniments: an immense body of water was distinguished rushing overhead, and several cries as of the human voice in great agony; while the scrambling of feet, and the confusion of tongues in the way of orders given and [illegible]ated, was indescribable.

As if alarmed by this Babel, the motion of the ship became most excessive, rolling violently from side to side, and pitching as if she intended never again to hold up her head.

Nothing could exceed the discomfiture thus produced; and Mrs. Archdeacon testified it in the loudest manner. Suddenly another crash was heard, and then a second cry on deck; and the vessel seemed to stagger from one end to the other under the tremendous influence of the blow.

"Mon Dieu, vat is that!" cried the French captain, lifting up his hands, and unable to suppress signs of considerable alarm.

"We are only pooped, that's all," replied Captain Simpson, who was lying at his whole length upon one of the lockers, and troubling himself no farther than to turn round from his left side to his right, and thus gain an easier position. Then in a minute or two, as he felt the motion of the ship, he added, "Very likely the rudder is damaged a bit or two, and she's run up into the eye of the wind."

Here another sea struck the vessel forward; and on deck arose an outcry so violent as to announce in the cabin that some sudden calamity had happened.

"There's her jury-mast gone by the board, I suppose," slowly drawled out the captain, still making no sort of effort to go upon deck.

Not so, however, the French captain; with violent gestures and many oaths, he ran round the cabin looking for his cap, which he had mislaid, and, uttering a variety of expressions that marked his dissatisfaction, he hastened to make the best of his way to the scene of action.

At this time the water was streaming down the closed hatchway in several delightful little rills. But if this was the alarming state of things below, there was nothing presented by the sight on the upper deck to assure the nerves of the French captain. The sea had made a complete breach over the forecastle of the Prosperity, swept away every vestige of her jury-masts, shattered into fragments the whole of her weather-bulwarks, and at each deep plunge that she made poured over the unprotected deck with the utmost fury.

Several of the unfortunate seamen had already been washed overboard before the eyes of their shipmates, who could only avoid their fate by lashing themselves to the bits, the booms, and various other parts of the wreck, for the Prosperity was now little more.

Care for their own safety swallowed up, in a great degree, the horror which they must have entertained at seeing their shipmates swept overboard without the possibility of affording them the least assistance. For a moment they were seen like dark specks on the glittering surface of the troubled foam, throwing out their arms wildly in every direction, as if imploring the assistance of those shipmates from whom they were thus cruelly severed—their frightful and distorted countenances, their wild gestures, and still more wild despair, leaving the most horrid picture upon the minds of their more fortunate countrymen as they slowly drifted past the ship, and were either buried in the mass of glistening froth, or became gradually lost in the distance to leeward, now heaved upon the culminating summit of a gigantic wave, now sinking into the terrific abyss of its overwhelming waters.

When the French captain looked around him, and saw his prize a mere helpless hulk, the expression of misery and disappointment that gathered upon his countenance would, in a less awful moment, have been truly comical. It was with great difficulty that he tried to emerge from the companion-hatchway; and this achieved, it was with increased peril that he put himself in communication with such of his crew as he could most rely upon for assistance and advice.

Whether the result of this consultation was influenced by their feeling somewhat strange in their new vessel, or whether it be a part in the French character to shine more in a brilliant onset than in a protracted struggle, we do not undertake to decide. This at least was the fact: they determined on requesting the co-operation of Captain Simpson in once more getting sufficient sail set upon the Prosperity to keep her from thus broaching-to in the trough of the sea, where the degree of straining was greater than most vessels could sustain with safety.

In accordance with this resolution, Monsieur Passoa returned to the cabin, where the confusion was indescribably great: the greater part of the ladies were either in hysterics, fainting fits, or in a state between each; while Captain Simpson having vainly endeavoured to allay their fears, gave up that amusement for one which they would have deemed equally impracticable, but which he found far more easy, namely, going to sleep.

Tired with long watching and labour, and the excitement which he had lately undergone, no bed of down ever pillowed a head more softly,

but fully given to repose, than the worthy Captain Simpson; while his nose poured forth an organic melody that sweetly contrasted with the screams of the ladies and the roaring of the gale.

"Capitaine Simpson," cried Monsieur de Passoa, laying a heavy hand on the huge shoulder of the slumberer, "will you see your ship go down before your eyes?"

"No, I wont," gruffly growled forth the captain, without ever waking fully from his nap.

"I tell you the vessel is foundering, Capitaine Simpson."

"No, she isn't."

"Vat, not foundering? will you not then come on deck and see for yourself?"

"No, I wont."

"What then vill you do?"

"What the devil are you kicking up all this row about?" cried Captain Simpson, at last fairly awake, and turning round upon the astonished Frenchman; "what's all the row upon deck? can't you let a fellow have a bit of a nap without coming down and bothering him here?"

"I tell you your ship is going down—she is what you call broaching to—she is sinking."

"Sinking be smothered! you don't know the Prosperity as well as I do. Don't come bothering me, but let the old girl alone; she's only washing her mug. If you want to be comfortable, just batten all the hatches down, let your men have a jorum of grog each, and turn in. It's no use trying to up-stick in a breeze like this. Station a hand at the pumps to see that she does not make too much leakage; and as soon as she's four feet of water in the hold give me a rouse,—then I'll begin to talk to you about it."

When Captain Simpson had delivered himself of these words, he turned round upon his side with a determination of paying no further attention to the Frenchman which the latter could not misinterpret; and with many shrugs of the shoulders, sighs, and anathemas, he returned to the quarter-deck, and ultimately took the advice which had been offered him. This was done perhaps less from choice than necessity. He soon discovered that his crew were utterly unable so to maintain their footing upon deck against the fury of the gale as to be able, with the slightest chance of success, to attempt the re-rigging of the jury-masts.

Lashed at their various posts, while the briny torrent poured over them, the feeling heart of Monsieur Passoa could not but pity their extreme sufferings, as with shivering limbs, and blanched and haggard faces, they maintained their desperate struggle with impending death.

Weak, wearied, and many of them cramped with excessive cold, it required no excessive sagacity to discover that the refitting of his ship was hopeless, from men who were scarcely able to stand in safety. Going round, therefore, to the various places where they had stationed themselves, he released them from all further duty, desiring them to go below and apply to old Spanker for that portion of spirit which the captain had so cordially recommended, and which he saw their state so

much required. In a few minutes he himself was the only person remaining on the deck of the dismasted merchantman. As his eye wandered over the vast expanse of water, now lashed in a scene of terrific grandeur by the violence of the storm, with so many chances around him threatening the destruction of his vessel, and he himself hardly knowing what spot of the ocean she occupied, his mind naturally reverted to those scenes in the story he had recently been relating, with the hope of drawing from his ancestor's trouble and ultimate triumph some fresh stock of courage and endurance. This was, however, sufficiently trying to muster; and, as a Frenchman's resignation is chiefly built on that worldly philosophy which seldom or never answers its possessor in the real hour of trial, it did unfortunately happen that the more he reflected upon his ancestor's tribulations, the more despondent he became over his own. This led him to pour out a variety of anathemas upon every thing or matter that he considered connected with his troubles. Hence, by a natural transition, he came to the contemplation of the resistance, character, and various merits and demerits of our worthy friend, Captain Simpson. "And to think," muttered he in his own language, after pursuing this theme for a few minutes, "to think of his sleeping in such a gale as this with as much coolness as if his ship was in harbour!"

This seemed to puzzle the worthy Frenchman most considerably; the more especially when he contrasted this act of calmness with the cries that ascended from Mrs. Archdeacon and some of her fellow-passengers. But it would have been hard indeed if such an instance of undeniable resignation had been altogether thrown away upon the captain. It was not. After sundry consultations with himself he came to the conclusion, that his wisest step would be to follow Captain Simpson's example. With this feeling he was on the point of descending to the cabin below, when the cabouse slowly opened, and the head of Spanker was seen peeping out.

The wary old seaman having reconnoitred around him a few minutes, and discovered that the French captain was the only one upon deck, now came forth, with that curiosity which induces a seaman to keep up an occasional recognizance of the ship's proceedings under any and all circumstances. As Spanker looked at the melancholy countenance of the privateer's-man, the grief of the latter seemed to touch him to the soul; and, conscious that himself and Captain Simpson had received much kinder conduct than one captor out of a thousand would have displayed, he so far conquered his prejudices against the Gallic nation of his brother sufferer as to walk boldly up to his side.

"Well my old cock-a-wax," said the English seaman, with somewhat more cordiality than good-breeding, "you seem to be rather downhearted, my boy."

"Oh!" said the Frenchman, with a heavy sigh, and shrugging his shoulders; "Oh, this d——d gale."

"Hallo there!—'vast heaving, Mr. Crappo, if you please. If you swear in that way, you'll catch no fish. Whatever the gale is, it is of God's own sending; and it's an ill wind that blows nobody no good, all the world over."

"Good! what good can it bring you?"

Spanker to this made no reply, but contented himself with looking knowingly in the face of the speaker, as much as to say, "If I thought I could trust you, I might put you up to a wrinkle on that head."

"Why for you look at me in that way?" said the Frenchman, who had not failed to observe the expression.

"Oh, nothing," said Spanker, resuming an air of nonchalance; then, after a minute's pause, as if changing the subject, he said, "I have just been giving your boys some grog below. I thought you had intended to jury-rig the craft, and take her into port. What made you send them all below in this fashion, while we are all lying here in the trough of the sea straining, every timber in the ship?

"Mon Dieu!" exclaimed the Frenchman, lifting up his hands, "what was the use of keeping them up here to perish with cold, while it is utterly impossible even to stand upon decks, much less to rig the vessel?"

"Oh, that was the reason, was it, Mr. Crappo?" said Spanker, smiling. "Now, supposing—I don't say we could do it—but supposing that I and my skipper, with the help of one or two of your crew, were to go for to rig this here craft, and to take her into port, don't you think we should be the presarvers of the lives of you and your brave Crappos what are drinking their grog below?"

"*L'homme propose et Dieu dispose*," replied the Frenchman.

"Why as to that, Mr. Crappo, as I don't understand that beautiful lingo quite so well as you seem to suppose, perhaps you'll be kind enough to say what you have to say in English. You've a very fine notion, Mounseer, of our language, I can tell you—so much so that I don't know which you speak best."

Touched by the seeming compliment of this ironical piece of flattery, the Frenchman complied with the request; and explained that by his former language he merely meant to signify that God—who disposed of all human propositions—only knew what was to become of them.

"Very true, your honour," said Spanker; "you seem to me to have a very proper notion on the subject; and my own opinion is, that we're going to Davy Jones's locker as fast as we can trot."

"Davy Jones's locker," repeated the Frenchman in some alarm, "vere is dat?"

Spanker looked over the lee-quarter, where the waves every few seconds threw their angry foam upon the quarter-deck, and significantly pointing downwards with his finger, said, "There."

"There!" returned the Frenchman, still unable to comprehend his meaning, "what is there?"

"Why the bottom, to be sure, Mr. Crappo."

"De bottom! Aha! Vere true, so he is."

The Frenchman sighed deeply, crossed himself, and looked up to heaven.

"Come, come, Johnny, my boy," muttered Spanker to himself, "you needn't be looking up there; there's no fear of your being driven into that port at any rate."

Then, observing that the gaze of the Gaul was still deeply fixed upon this first object of his contemplations, he ventured to draw his attention to his own plans, by giving him a slight poke in the ribs, adding, "Now suppose, Mr. Crappo, that I and my captain were to undertake to get this ship into port; don't you think, considering we should have saved all your precious lives, that you ought to have no objection to that port being an English one?"

"Mon Dieu! I wish I was in any port rather than out here."

"Why yes, Mounseer, it would be an exchange for the better. But what do you say—do you go for to agree to it?"

"Par example! It is a nice question. How vould your English authorities consider me and my men—as prisoners of var?"

Spanker hemmed a little at this question. However unskilled in diplomacy in general, he felt the full delicacy of treating this difficult point. "Will ye take a quid of baccy, Mr. Mounseer," replied he, offering his box, "while I do my best to explain to your honour the English law upon that point."

"Non!—Merci, non," said the chivalric Frenchman, shrinking back in horror from this profanation.

"Well, I ask your honor's pardon. No harm, I hope?—and touching the matter of the prisoners, you see that would require a little nicety, as far as I can understand the case, in course it would. I hav'nt been speaking to Captain Simpson; and this notion of mine only comes from myself, which may-so-be he might put a stopper on directly he came to hear of it. However, as far as I can understand the law, you and your gentlemen below might at first sight in some sort be considered as prisoners of war; but as soon as ever the rights of the story came to be heard, I've no doubt that our government would send you over to your own country free as a lark, Mr. Mounseer, with a handsome reward in your pocket from the proprietors of this here ship for salvage."

"That vould be vere juste—that vould be vere proper."

"Why, sir, seeing how much you've done for the good of the ship since you've first fell in with her, I must say I think it would."

Monsieur de Passoa on hearing this observation looked round at the old seaman, as if to detect whether the latter was ridiculing him; but old Spanker's face looked as immovable as monumental marble. And quite satisfied that this had been an accidental *contre-temps* of the utterer, went on to remark, that if he could only satisfy himself that such would be the justice rendered to himself and crew on reaching an English port, he should have no objection to give the ship up to the efforts and navigation of the British crew.

"Well, sir," rejoined Spanker, "I think as I said before, that would be the best plan if we could only get the captain to agree to it. You see, sir, he's rather queer in his ways, sir, is Captain Simpson."

"Vary," said the Frenchman, lifting up his eyes, "to think of such a tempest as this and he asleep!"

"Why, Mounseer, I must say it's taking it coolly; but we English, you see, are bred up to do that. However, if you'll promise to sign such an agreement, and let us have it down in black and white, I'll go down to the skipper, and see what I can do with him."

"You'll be vere clever," returned Monsieur Passoa, "if you get him to give up his sleep, and come upon deck to stand all this racket. Vhy, it was your captain who first said it was utterly impossible to do any thing towards rigging the prize in such a gale of wind."

"Oh no, Mounseer, you must have made a mistake; he never could have said that."

"But he did, though, for I heard him."

"Did he?" returned Spanker; and a third party might have observed something like a sly smile stealing over the weather-beaten face of the seaman as he said so. Monsieur de Passoa for a moment also seemed to suspect something of the sort; but when he looked again, the countenance was immovably rigid as before. "However," said Spanker, "if he said that, why in course there's much less chance of his altering his opinion to think with me; but if you'll promise to sign the agreement in black and white, I'll go down and try."

The Frenchman remained musing for a few moments in silence, and then, looking round on the wrecked and ruined state of the ship, gave a deep sigh, as much as to say, "Anything is better than this;" and promised compliance.

With many seeming doubts, Spanker now returned below to his captain; but no sooner did he whisper in the ear of the latter, than sleep immediately seemed to fly the slumberer, and starting to his feet, he produced a writing-desk and the other requisite materials for the proposed agreement. Having dipped his pen in the inkstand, and made several ineffectual efforts to deliver his muse of the required document, he finally seemed to give it up in despair, and beckoning Spanker to his side, the following conversation took place,

"I've been thinking, Spanker, that this here agreement is a very nice matter, and requires to be drawn up in a first style sort of way."

"Not a doubt of it, your honour," returned Spanker.

"'Twill be the only hold we shall have of these here Frenchmen."

"I never yet heard, your honour, of one of them that could be trusted any further than you could see him."

"No, nor even that, Spanker." As the captain made this very liberal remark, he rubbed his head with an air of great perplexity, "and therefore, I've been thinking," continued he, "to get that nice young gentleman, the old catamaran's secretary, and let him draw it up in a regular hook-me-deep style, so that if these Frenchmen by any accident do get to windward of us, we may have something to show that the weather-gage is ours."

Spanker too having assented to the extreme wisdom of this proposition, departed, in accordance with its dictates, to call the extremely nice young man, who coming very readily at the summons, listened, with all the gravity of mature manhood, to the requisition made of her services, and with equal readiness immediately set about to afford them. After half an hour's labour, the important convention was drawn out, and Captain Passoa came down below to seal and sign.

Having gone through this act with his accustomed form, he delivered over the paper to Captain Simpson, and with it possession of the ship,

in the presence of several of the French crew. As soon as this was done, the captain turned to Spanker, saying,

"Now, my boy, jump upon deck; stick up a bit of a flag-staff aft, and then plant the Union Jack upon it, just to show that this craft has changed hands once more."

"Ay, ay, your honour," was the ready response; "there never was any order whatsomedever in my life that I'd greater pleasure in obeying;" and going to one of the lockers while the Frenchmen were still standing round him, he at once produced

> "The flag that braved a thousand years,
> The battle and the breeze,"

and immediately rushed with it upon deck.

Now, although the deed by which this was committed was irrevocably executed, a sudden electrical feeling seemed to pass through the breasts of the privateers who were spectators of the scene. At first they seemed inclined to oppose the egress of Spanker from the cabin, and only appeared to be waiting their captain's command to do so; but Passoa's was a mind of a different stamp. He moved quietly aside as Spanker approached him, and contenting himself with a deep sigh, beheld, without comment or interruption, this little triumph of a flag for which, we must confess, that he had no very great cause of affection.

In a few minutes, Spanker returned to say that he had made shift to hoist the flag on deck by nailing it to the blade of an oar and lashing this upright on the ship's taffrail. The surrender of the ship being now complete, Captain Simpson requested M. Passoa to offer his crew a reward of sixty francs to any Frenchman who would volunteer his services in helping to get the ship under sail once more.

Stimulated by this reward, six of the stoutest and least exhausted seamen came forward, and joined themselves to Spanker in re-forming a crew for the Prosperity, while, with a readiness that did him great honour, M. Passoa volunteered to lend his own services, both as an interpreter to his crew of Captain Simpson's orders, and also as second under the Englishman's command. The first act of Captain Simpson's new authority was to see that his ship's company enjoyed as good a meal as he could provide for them, before entering upon the arduous duties required at their hands.

This over, he summoned them all on deck, making each individual secure himself by a lashing to some part of the ship to windward with a tether sufficiently long to allow of their moving to and fro. A general laugh at their appearance, like so many tied-up dogs, preceded their falling to work on their more serious occupation, and gave a most valuable fillip to their exertions in so doing.

"Now, Spanker, my boy, as this wind is slap fair for Plymouth, —that's the port I shall try and run for—it's no use losing time trying to get up a single mast. Just pick out three of the stoutest studding-sail-booms from the spars amidships; lash them well together at one end with a tye-block, and we'll hoist them up as a triangle, and set the two legs forward, as they'll have to bear most of the strain; and then while you're about that, I'll get a couple of top-gallant sails stitched

together and crossed well over with inch-rope athwart the belly of it to leeward: I think we then may have a chance of getting some sail to stand. And now heart and will set to my boys, and hurrah for the honour of Old England."

"Ay, ay, your honour, you may depend upon me. I'd rather be washed overboard than fail in this business after that agreement which I'd so much difficulty in getting you to sign."

A knowing look here passed between the captain and Spanker, and they instantly separated on their respective duties.

"Now, Mounseers," cried the latter, addressing his French shipmates, "lend us a hand to haul out some of these booms, will you?" With no little merriment at Spanker's expense, and his efforts in the French language, the privateers, understanding his wishes from his gestures, readily gave a helping hand, while at every few minutes the stout old hull plunging into the very body of the sea, and with most magnanimous obstinacy going right through it, covered, as it were, her own forecastle with a deep blue sea, that required the utmost strength and courage to withstand.

More than once or twice, some of the French seamen were swept fairly overboard in the general deluge; and nothing but the precaution taken by Captain Simpson, ridiculous as it at first appeared, enabled their friends to drag them safe on board again.

At every fresh accident of this kind the Frenchmen, who seemed inclined to be horribly depressed, observed that their fellow-labourer Spanker only laughed the more, till at last, the sight of his jolly old phiz, animated by such persevering mirth, and often in the very act filled to overflowing with salt water, induced them to take a more hilarious view of their position; and, after sundry narrow escapes, and an hour and a half's hard labour, Captain Simpson had the gratification of seeing the sail once more set upon his old barkey: and while the well-supported canvas shivered before the furious gale, that vainly endeavoured to rend it into shreds, the Prosperity gathered sufficient headway before the breeze to go bounding onwards at a speed that not only enabled her rudder to act with full command, but effectually relieved both the ship's timbers and passengers from the heavy straining motion to which she had been hitherto subjected, and promised, ere long, to bring them in sight of land once more.

When the Frenchmen at length beheld this result, they began to open their eyes and question one another why they had not achieved the same end; but the answer to this was very faintly returned, since, disguise it as they would, they found it amounted much too closely to a mere confession that they had not been able to command the same means—a bull-dog courage, namely, which no misfortunes could beat down, and a perseverance which alike defies and disregards every obstacle; this was not very satisfying. But, on the other hand, they found themselves relieved from the imminent danger which before threatened them; and placing the one feeling against the other, they allowed themselves to be put into watches, according to the desire of Captain Simpson, to take charge of the ship during the night, and went below to obtain those refreshments of sleep and food which their

labours not only rendered most necessary, but which in reality, possess the most persuasive influence over the mind, whether the emotion irritating be either danger or spleen. During the whole of that night the ship remained scudding in the way we have described; the watch, on the part of the English, being divided turn by turn about between Spanker and Captain Simpson; while in the cabin below, prayers for safety, and copious thanksgiving for preservation, ascended for that agreeable change in the ship's condition, which was manifest to all on board.

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## CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

### MATTERS STILL LOOK WELL.

"Hang it, Spanker, my boy, after all the trouble and bother we've had with the old craft; hang me if I grudge my labour, she's worthy of it—here, after all this racketing and knocking about, she's only made eight inches of water. Hang me, but she's a jolly old ship after all. Let's drink the long life of the Prosperity, and her safe arrival in English waters." As this was said, the captain tossed off his bumper, and repeating his words, and following his example most readily, Spanker did the same. "Now, Spanker, my boy," continued the captain, "you've got as much grog on board as you can carry without damage, so brush away upon deck. It'll never do to leave those Frenchmen in charge of the ship, though we have got their word for it. It's very probable we might wake some morning and find ourselves run slap ashore under some French battery, by unavoidable mistake; that's just what I want to leave undone."

"Ay, your honour, that'll be no ways nice. I hope soon to be shoving our nose into Cawsand Bay."

"Cawsand Bay, my boy! oh, we shall never be able to hold on in Cawsand Bay with such a gale blowing as this. No, no, we must run slap in for Plymouth harbour, at all risks. The devil take a government, I say, that pretends to call itself the head of a great commercial empire like England, yet obliges us poor, wretched, ill-used dogs of seamen to add to our other risks that of running nearly half-way up the Channel before they can find a single port in which to shelter."

"Why, your honour, couldn't we run into Falmouth?"

"Falmouth in such weather as this! You might as well try to run into the eye of a needle. In the first place, it requires a very good pilot to get in at the best of times, at night especially; but unless the tide is favourable, there's a bar on which we are sure to go aground, and be beat to pieces."

"Well, your honour, if so be as that's the case, all I can say is that it's a burning shame to Old England—a country that lives by marchandize, as it may be, and who, if they're not great at sea, must speedily become one of the most insignificant nations in Europe—I say, it's a burning shame to such people to expose us, our lives, and property, and families, in this manner, when all along the coast are bays which very

little expense would turn into right good harbours at any time and in any weather."

"Bays! I believe there are, indeed, if the government had only justice and spirit to make use of them. Where on earth could there be found a finer bay for a refuge than Mount's Bay, in Cornwall, close to Penzance? Why, if you tried to form a bay yourself for a harbour of refuge at all times, there's only one thing more you could do to it, and that is run a breakwater out from a point there, that seems made on purpose, and you might harbour a fleet of line o' battle ships, ready at any moment to slip out and attack the enemy, and enable vessels of all classes, either merchanters or others, in such weather as this to find a ready refuge. But, come, it's o' no use growling over our grievances; jump on deck, and keep your weather-eye up."

"Ay, ay, your honour," said Spanker, and touching his hat, he proceeded on deck, it being now Captain Simpson's turn to remain below. M. Passoa had command of the deck; a veteran old Frenchman was steering at the helm, while his commander paced up and down, muttering his French curses on the various calamities still impending.

"Vell, my good Spankaire, suppose you could give me one bit of blue sky big enough for de Dutchman's breech, I voud give you one tousand francs."

"In weather like this, your honour, to be sure I may have a different opinion; but I think your own breeches, which are made of good stout blue flushing, are quite as good as any Dutchman's; and if you'd got a wet cloud wrapped round your loins, you'd soon feel the difference of it, I can tell."

"My good Spankaire, you no understand me. I mean I wish to take one leetle observation by the stars, to find out vere we are going to."

"Oh, never mind that, your honour. We be agoing somewhere, no doubt we shall soon arrive at it. If I know anything of a ship's way by looking on the water as it flies astern, we're not cutting along at much less than thirteen knots an hour."

"Ah, my good Spankaire, I do respect your ignorance; what says your poet—'ignorance is such bliss; 'tis only folly that is wise.'"

"I dare say, your honour, that the poets say all that. But what little traffic I've had in them, I found them all such cursed liars, I left off their acquaintance in time, for fear they should corrupt my morals."

"Ah, ah, corrupt your morale! Vere good, vere good! Which of the poets did you most read?"

"Why, Mounseer, owing to a mistake in my eddication, I never larnt to read."

"Not able to read! Ah, my good Spankaire, you are then throwing away your talents. You should be a critic."

"Aye, to be sure, mounseer. The critics don't read, but they say a good deal for all that; and now, if I may make so bold as to ask you to hold the reel, I'll just turn to and heave the log."

M. de Passoa having willingly complied with this request, Spanker hove the log, and found that the ship was driving at nearly the rate of fourteen miles an hour. When we consider the little quantity of sail

that was set, this fact alone will suffice to give a very accurate idea of the terrific violence of the tempest; while, in addition to this velocity the whole upper surface of the water being also driven by the wind, the real rate at which the Prosperity was moving over the ground below, could not have been far short of twenty miles an hour. At this furious rate the ship continued scudding during the whole of that night and the following day, when about eleven o'clock in the first watch of the succeeding evening, a dim light was discovered burning on the larboard bow. At first, in the extreme distance at which this appeared, great doubts were entertained whether it was not merely a star; but being dead to leeward, where, of course a thick bank of fog would naturally be, this idea was soon abandoned for the more probable hope that the rays in question emanated from a lighthouse.

At first, the parties most interested—viz. the English part of the passengers and crew—scarcely dared to entertain the belief that their sufferings were so nearly closed. As, however, each approaching moment caused the light to burn more and more brightly, the eager prayer that they had not been too sanguine arose from every bosom. The sea still ran in undiminished violence; and waves, on which the hull of the Prosperity swam like a little cock-boat, now buoyed up upon their roaring crests, now hid in their deep abysses—roared and foamed around them; while every few seconds any ordinary observer would have been unable to doubt the certainty of the Prosperity's destruction, as one mountainous mass of waters, after another, curled over her shattered stern, and threatened to sweep every thing before it to the profound and agitated depths below. Still there, however, she floated on, speeding from sea to sea like some poor agitated animal, chased to the last pitch of desperate exertion, every bound of whose frame appeared to be the last successful effort that could be made to escape its impending fate. After living in this terrific state of suspense, however, for three days, the horrors of the situation had grown so familiar to their weary sight and jaded feelings, as scarcely to affect any man on board except the passengers; and one or two of these having come up casually to take a glance at the surrounding scene, soon found it so horrible to the sight as well as dangerous to the frame, from the difficulty of holding on, that they speedily beat their retreat below, amid the jeers of Spanker, who, if he had been their shipmate for a thousand centuries, would have been utterly unable to forgive their non-appearance at a moment when a few determined swords, though wielded in unexperienced hands, might have turned the issue of the day against the boarders. Eveline alone appeared to find a pleasure in contemplating the conflict of the elements. For hours together she remained at the stern, leaning against the bulwarks, and watching wave after wave as each gigantic crest broke into a million masses, and seemed about to fall upon the deck.

Still anxiously longing to lay down the burden of her life, that which was terrible to others conveyed only a sensation of grandeur to her: and whether the sea struck the vessel and swept her to the bottom, or whether she still survived for some other calamity, seemed almost a matter of equal indifference. The melancholy resignation and endurance

marked on her countenance pleaded for her so effectually in the heart of Spanker, that he could not forbear contrasting it with the awe-stricken expression of the other passengers, and, though the deduction staggered him not a little, drawing conclusions in his own mind that "The young gentleman, arter all, hadn't as much of the white feather as one would at first have supposed." With this impression, he actually so far forewent his prejudices, as to draw gradually near to the object of his doubt, while they were running towards the light, and, as he phrased it, to knock up a little bit of a conversation.

"A nice little excursion of pleasure, your honour, this has been for a first voyage to sea?"

"So pleasant, Spanker," replied Eveline, who, like many others on board, had taken a fancy to the character of the rude seaman; "so peculiarly pleasant, that if I once get my foot on English land again, I think I shall choose a different line for the future."

"Your honour is in the right of it: to me this is a mere little bit of a spree, since it's not sartin but it may all end well enough, arter all. But I minds, when I was a youngster myself, when I should have thought such an introduction to blue water rather a queerish one; but Lord bless us and save us, you've had all the sours without the sweets, stewed up in that tarnation cabin below. I only wonder how you kept the breath in you. You lost all the best of it. If you had only been upon deck, you'd have seen one of the prettiest little skrimmages as never was. My eyes, how them there Frenchmen did go down, when once we got our cutwater fairly across their bends! I've been many years afloat, and never seen the likes of it. 'Twas worth a Jew's-eye any day of the week, if it was n't, d—n my eyes."

"Oh Spanker, how can you, when the excitement of battle is over, talk in this exulting manner of the death of so many of your fellow-creatures." As Eveline said this she shaded her beautiful eyes with her hand, as if to shut out the picture her imagination presented. The remembrance, too, of the dreadful night in which she had seen her own family slaughtered, one after another, appeared to rise up before her, and give a personal reality to the scene, which was little needed to complete its horrors.

"Why, your honour, for the matter of that," returned Spanker, taking out his tobacco-box, and selecting a fresh quid with great nicety, "a gentleman like you, with such a wery soft voice, no doubt has a great deal of compassion for these French varmint; but, axing your pardon for the liberty, I think you are quite out of your reckoning there,—there were one or two poor boys of marchanters knocked heads and tails aboard here, for whom I felt more than I should to have seen the whole bunch of privateers sent down smash together. Poor hearts! 'tis somewhat hard to be knocked on the head by a cannon-shot, when you've never made any bargain for that sort of thing at first shipping: but as for them Frenchmen, killing them is no sort of harm; for if I've heerd right upon the subject, they don't believe in nothing to come after this life, d—n their eyes!—whereas you see, Sir, if they was religious men, like you or I, why when we get doubled up, or shoved by like an old

blanket, there's an after-reckoning to come, which makes it a wery serious sort of a matter."

"Why, truly, Spanker, I had not taken that view of the subject," replied Eveline, scarcely able to keep her countenance at hearing this varied estimation of human life; but seeing the futility of a theological argument with her present shipmate, she turned the conversation by demanding "how far he thought that lighthouse might be off?"

"How far off, sir?—Why, I should say not far short of three leagues,—I should think them lighthouses in general is a great deal higher than the poop of a three-decker, and that you may see in a tolerably clear day fourteen miles off; so allowing for the distance run, I think we're as nigh three leagues as may be."

"In that case, I suppose we shall be abreast of it in the course of an hour."

"Less than that, your honour—less than that."

"I'm very glad to hear it."

"Ay, I suppose you can't be sorry for that. But I can tell you something for which you'll be still more glad;" and Spanker approached Eveline's ear with a knowing confidential air, which plainly intimated that he had some great secret to communicate.

"Indeed!" said Eveline, lending full attention; "what can that be?"

"Why, your honour, these here Frenchmen pretended to come to a sort of capitivation with the skipper, and have agreed to give the ship up, on condition of our jury-rigging and bringing her into harbour. Now I never believed a Frenchman's word but once."

"And when was that, Spanker?"

"Why, once, by some unaccountable accident, I happened to save one of them creturs' lives,—a young hadder he was, and hadn't come to full growth like,—when a shipmate was just about to cut him down. Would you believe, and I'm alive and here to tell it? if I didn't catch the young crocodile, three days after, making love to one of my wives, as the captain had allowed me to bring to sea in the frigate! He was a prisoner on board, you see, sir, and therefore did no duty; and while I was keeping my watch on deck at the conn the young vagabond took this darty advantage of me;—and she, too, was not over praiseworthy in the matter; for what right has a woman to let a man make love to her who can't speak three words in her own language?"

"Well, never mind that, Spanker,—we'll let that go," said Eveline, who began to be fearful how far this second discussion might go, and thus endeavoured to stop it *in limine*.

"Why no, your honour, it isn't much matter here or there; only it shows how wery deceitful them 'ere sex hare. Howsomdever, as soon as I hard that he'd been putting his arm round my wife's waist, I gave him a tarnation good welting."

"What's that, Spanker?"

"Why, you folks on shore are more polite, and call it walloping; but it's much of a muchness. I just took the liberty of smashing the bridge of his nose, and knocking his two eyes into one nearly; and

then, sir, came out his blackguardlike ingratitude. I asked him how he could think of trying to make a man miserable who, only three days before, had saved his life. To this he answered in French, which some of my messmates were good enough to translate—that 'I was a d—d fool for my pains.' So ever since that I've always said, that if ever I did a good-natured thing for a Frenchman, Old Nick should have me for nothing. — Now hang me, your honour, if I hav'nt altogether forgotten what we were talking about"—

"Why, if I remember right, Spanker, it was about that light, and about some secret that would please me better than going into harbour."

"Ay, right, your honour, and this is it—them Frenchmen have given their word to let us take this ship into a British port. I don't understand their lingo—God forbid I should—and therefore I can't say whether they've had any conversation between themselves of the sort I name or not; only somehow or other I never can believe that the French blood 'll be quiet in 'em—and let us take their prize and themselves too, that's more, into a foreign port, where they'll be little better than prisoners; and if so be I'm only right in my conjecture, and you 'll keep quiet and lie hush, you 'll see one of the most tarnation bits of jolly fighting that was ever your good luck to set your eyes on. I've got everything ready here to give these Frenchmen as nice a treat on the rise as may be; and if the sea hasn't spoiled the powder, there's four of the ship's pistols in that hammock-netting: as you are a young gentleman what seems inclined to a bit of a spree, I tell this to you that you may know where to clap your hand on it."

"Thank you, Spanker, for your information. If the Frenchmen do rise upon us after giving their word for our peaceful possession, you may depend upon it that I'll willingly bear my share in punishing them, and endeavouring to keep the vessel in our own command; but in this respect I can't help thinking you've wronged our enemies. From all I've seen of M. Passoa, he never would sanction such an act of villany."

"What! you mean Little-breeches, the skipper, what I call Mounseer? Why no, sir, I don't think, to do him justice, he would have any share in such a scaly trick. But you don't know Johnny Crappo as well as I do, if you believe the others wouldn't do it as soon as look at you."

"Well, Spanker," said Captain Simpson, coming up at this moment from the weather-side of the quarter-deck, where he had been walking with the privateer captain, "do you begin to make out that light ahead?"

"Why, your honour, I don't think there's much doubt about its being a house."

"Oh! no doubt of that whatever. But what lighthouse do you make it out to be?"

"Why, sir, as we've been steering, as nigh as we could, for the British Channel, and this light first hove in sight broad away on the larboard bow, I suppose it must be the Eddystone."

"Why yes, Spanker, that's just what I've been saying to Captain Passover, to windward there; and we've agreed to run slap into Plymouth harbour."

"Hallo, sir, what's the row?" cried Spanker, suddenly turning about as the voice of the French captain was heard in loud and angry tones. "Would you—would you, you scoundrel?" said the old seaman, addressing some one nearer them; and, with a vigour and swiftness little to be expected from his age, he tore open the long pilot-coat he wore, thrust his hand beneath it, and in another second a stout cutlass was flashing over his head, and parrying the strokes of a couple of Frenchmen's blades, who had taken the advantage of Captain Simpson's being engaged in conversation, to attempt cutting him down.

As with extraordinary dexterity Spanker jumped from one spot to another with as much firmness on the decks of the pitching vessel as if merely dancing a hornpipe on the forecastle, in a quiet breeze, and a peaceful circle of admiring shipmates, his powerful weapon gleamed right and left; and as it came in contact with the steel of his adversaries, bright sparks of fire were dashed off in brilliant contrast with the murkiness of the night, and driven along the gale.

"Would you, you villains? Jolly old England for ever against all the world!" shouted the enthusiastic old veteran; then, without looking round, or losing any vantage-ground before the superior numbers that pressed on him, he addressed Eveline with "Now little soft speech; now is your time for a jolly fight. Mind what I told you about the pistols."

But the remembrance was unnecessary. Something of the pugnacious ardour of Spanker naturally belonged to Eveline's disposition: she had known all the horrors of a deadly struggle hand to hand; she sighed deeply and bitterly for that repose which the grave alone could afford her wounded spirit. She had promised her assistance in the fray; and more than all, she now beheld the weaker party taken at a base and treacherous advantage,—once again the prudence of a woman melted away before the fiery nature of a soul that should rather have animated the breast of a hero than the bosom of a female.

"Here are arms, Captain Simpson," cried she, quickly perceiving that he had no weapons, and seemed suddenly taken aback at this sudden demonstration of the privateer's crew. The hammock-netting where the arms were concealed was abaft the spot where the gallant Spanker, like a lion in a rocky pass, held his increasing enemies at bay.

Throwing open the tarpauling covering, Eveline snatched up two pistols; and Captain Simpson, with a joy known only to men who have passed through similar dangers, once more grasped in his huge hand a long keen cutlass.

"Quick—quick, my boy, or d—n me, I'm done for!" cried the English captain, who could see the effort Eveline was making to come to his assistance, and, sorely pressed on every point, had been obliged to retreat against the stump of the mizen-mast, which not coming high enough to support his back, he was in imminent peril of being bent forcibly over it. Darting like lightning to his side, the left hand of Eveline drew a pistol trigger full in the face of the old seaman's most powerful enemy. The flash—the first that had been fired—illumined the whole of the deck of the shattered merchant vessel, revealing

distinctly the faces of numbers of their opponents; and, as it was reflected back from the dazzling line of foam, that, like a halo, circled round her as she flew onwards, the Frenchman against whom it was levelled was seen writhing in the agonies of death upon the deck.

"Bravo! little soft speech," shouted Spanker, pointing his sword straight before him, where a cutlass was raised to cut down Eveline to the chine, and getting his feet behind him against the stump of the mizen-mast, the English seaman sprang like a perfect tiger on the dense body of his assailants, and literally transfixed two of them with the same thrust—nothing stopping the progress of his sword but the forcible surge with which the hilt of it came home against the bosom of the unhappy man, whose heart was still palpitating its last throes of life on its ensanguined blade.

The sudden violence of this charge—for it was nothing less—aided by the roll of the ship, seemed to throw the whole body of the attacking party into utter confusion,—most of them lost their footing, and were thrown with frightful violence over the break of the poop upon the gangway deck below, where the bulwarks, being utterly demolished from the fury of the gale, four of them, after desperate and ineffectual attempts to save themselves, rolled overboard into the engulfing waters.

Spanker, who had also found his way to the deck, was encumbered with the two seamen his sword had transfixed; and while endeavouring to recover the mastery of his weapon, and regain his feet, was only preserved from destruction by the vengeful steel of his captain, which, wielded with his usual terrific strength, cut to pieces, one after another, the disordered Frenchmen, still staggering from the effects of Spanker's unexpected sally.

"England for ever!" shouted the captain, as he hewed down the last of these miserable wretches; and then, seeing M. de Passoa striving with unequal numbers to windward, profited by his own seaman's example, charged bodily against them, and, at the point of the cutlass, assisted the loyal Frenchman in driving down upon the deck below the faithless traitors, who had vainly endeavoured to tarnish the integrity of his word.

"Croix de St. Jean," shouted M. de Passoa, who now, that his blood was up and sense of honour aroused, seemed to fight as valiantly against his false subordinates, as he had before led them; and both he and Captain Simpson, following up the advantages already gained, leaped undauntedly down into the very thick of those cutlasses that were yet raised against them on the gangway.

Up to this time the Frenchman at the wheel had remained quietly steering, seemingly inclined to fulfil the engagement entered into by his commander, or at least not joining those who had so faithlessly endeavoured first to profit by, and then to break it. Now, however, when he imagined that his treachery would be unseen, he darted from the wheel, quietly snatched up a sword from one of his slaughtered fellow-countrymen, and stealing behind Spanker, who had only that instant succeeded in disengaging himself from among the dead and dying and was in the act of springing from the poop on the

combatants below, and taking, as he imagined, a very secure aim at the seaman's head in the darkness of the night, would in all probability then and there have finished the career of the fight-loving man-of-war's man.

There was, however, close at hand, an opponent on whose interference he little calculated.

Eveline, like a prudent general of reserve, had been content with fulfilling that important duty, and keeping strictly within it.

The fight, however long it has taken to describe, was the work of so few seconds, that almost as soon as she had discharged her first pistol, she found the tide of battle had rolled away from around her to a more distant quarter. As it swept, therefore, onwards to the forecastle, she took the opportunity of throwing down her discharged weapon, and returning to the fortunate store whence she had obtained it, snatched at another brace of loaded pistols, and sticking them in the waistband of her trousers, prudently resolved not to put her own feeble strength in personal contact with that of the iron-limbed beings round her; but simply following at Spanker's side, in the capacity of aide-de-camp, to yield to that redoubted Ulysses such occasional protection and assistance, as her fire-arms, and the skill with which she could wield them, enabled her so effectually to do.

When, therefore, the French helmsman stole, as he thought unobserved, behind Spanker, her eye was upon him.

Armed as we have described, she was in the very act of flying to his side, when she beheld this insidious attack, and the deadly consequences likely to spring from it. With an equally noiseless step she glided up to the two sole surviving occupants of the poop, gently cocked her pistol, drew her thumb-nail rapidly across the flint, to guard, in some degree, against its missing fire; and as the French sword idly cleft the air above the head of her friend, the sharp report of her pistol rung its instant death-knell on the helmsman, and was then borne away in the powerful blast to leeward.

The impetus already given to the Frenchman's sword caused it to fall on Spanker's very effectively-skulled head; but, protected by a thick south-wester hat, the blow was harmless. Nevertheless, however, it did call Spanker's attention to the fact of having some attentive friend behind him,—swiftly turning round, and seeing at a glance what had happened, with characteristic carelessness and gratitude, he exclaimed,

"Hallo, Johnny! have you caught it? Bravo! little soft speech! that's the second go I owes you;"—and then jumping down on the gangway deck, he charged forward, with all his strength, into the only contesting group that now remained, where the Captains Passoa and Simpson, though actuated by different feelings, were fighting side by side.

Awed by knowing that their own commander was against them, the unprincipled privateersmen had required but little more to make them abandon in despair the course they had so unwisely adopted. This additional blow was now found in the impetuous charge of Spanker, who, dashing along with the whole of his personal impetus given to his

already powerful weapon, cut away right and left on the less strongly-made Frenchmen,—adding, the while, to the other terrors of his prowess, the most vehement vociferations of his favourite war-cry—" Hurrah for Old England!"—to which he kindly added, with the feelings of a warm ally, addressing himself the while to the feelings of M. de Passoa—" Go it Johnny Crappo—Sang Craw for ever."

The French mutineers now fairly perceiving the day was very doubtful, slunk off, one by one, down the fore-hatchway, till at last the few who remained, either fancying their shipmates were killed, or knowing themselves to be deserted, were seized with a sudden panic, and suddenly turning round in a body, fled to the only place of refuge that was open to them, with all the speed that was in their power.

" Hurrah my boys!" shouted Captain Simpson. " Forward, Spanker—down with them—clap on the scuttle, and across with the bar. As we have got the varmint under, we'll keep them there."

" Ay, ay, your honour. Never was such times—down with you, you blackguard,"—as one of the Frenchmen attempted to look up,—down went the unhappy Frenchman's head, with a muttered malediction;—down went the heavy scuttle after it, upon the only mode of egress; while, as it did so, a pistol report rang loudly in the cabin below, and the ball whizzing past Spanker's nose, took the tip of his ear off.

" Did you think it, you rascals?" cried the old boy, grimly smiling, and in the heat of the moment unconscious of any wound: in another second he had succeeded in crossing the bar, and all further annoyance from that quarter was at an end. " There, my boys, you're booked at last," said he, as he put the padlock through the bolt.

" By God you are the finest Frenchman as ever I see," said Captain Simpson, grasping the hand of M. Passoa with no feigned enthusiasm. " After this night I never again will say that there's no honour in a Frenchman."

" Ma foi; forbid it justice—Croix de St. Jean! There never yet existed a true Frenchman, whose honour was not as bright as his sword."

" Well, Mounseer, wery likely, only I have not met many of them, d'ye see; but as for you, I will say that it's true enough; and as for your sword being bright, there's no fear of that while you use it so sharply."

The Frenchman, on hearing this compliment, made an infinity of bows, accompanied with a most voluble utterance of thanks; but as these were spoken in French, they were wholly unintelligible to the party to whom they were offered.

Captain Simpson did not attempt to reply to it; but once more shaking the maker by the hand, said very heartily—" Ay, ay, Mounseer, I understands all you means to say; but just allow me to ask you if you hadn't better go below and have your wounds bound up? I'm sure you must have got a few before I came up to your side on the quarter-deck, when you had all them fellows to keep at bay with your long toasting-fork."

" Oh nothing at all, Monsieur le Capitaine—they are de mere scratch."

"Yes, sir, but scratches, if there are many of them, may make a man as weak as one good slashing wound; and you must bear in mind now, that we've got to keep watch and watch, and must therefore bear ourselves as well up to the mark as we can."

"Ah, c'est vrai," said the Frenchman, shrugging his shoulders, "then we will go down together."

"No, Mounseer, if I do, shiver my timbers. You go down below first, and let the ladies attend to you. I'm scarcely touched at all, by some good luck. Spanker, if he's much the matter with him, shall go with you. Are you hurt, Spanker, my boy?"

"The devil a hurt, your honour, a fair stand-up fight ever did me! I believe I've only got half my ear knocked off, and one or two pricks in the body from them Frenchmen's sharp swords. All I want is a good stiff glass of grog presently, and a shake of that ere Mounseer gentleman's hand; for I will say this for him wherever I goes, he's a right down jolly good chap; and all I know is, that—if so be, when we gets ashore, our government claps him in limbo, why knock my toplights out if I don't cut oyer to France, and give myself up as a prisoner of war by way of making satisfaction for it."

As the old tar said this, he thrust out his great horny hand, and seizing the Frenchman's delicate fingers within its grasp, gave it such a shake as might have been much in fashion among the Titans.

"Spankaire, Spankaire, you forget I have on de ring," cried Captain Passoa, dancing about till he had freed the suffering member from the fleshy vice of his admiring friend, and then holding it up, pointed to the half-score of gaudy annulets by which it was encircled, one or two of which had been forced nearly into the bone by Spanker's too hearty demonstration.

"I like vary much your way of treating your enemies, Monsieur Spankaire, but for dam such mode of saluting your friends. Ah, ah, Monsieur Secretary," turning round and seeing Eveline, "what, have you flesh your maiden sword to-night?"

"No," interrupted Spanker; "bless his jolly young eyes, he's done a precious sight better than that—he put a sharp shot in when it was most needed. If it hadn't been for him, I think we should all have been either with our throats cut laying upon deck, or tossed overboard, or down under hatches, instead of them blackguards below."

"Vere good, vere good, like my ancestor then, the chevalier; he has fairly won his golden spurs, and shall have the guerdon of valour."

As M. de Passoa said this, he playfully laid his ruddy rapier over the shoulder of Eveline, and they all moved aft in a body, the captain to take the helm, and the others to go below and get their wounds dressed.

When the unhappy ladies in the state-rooms once more detected the hateful sounds of fire-arms and clashing of swords on deck, accompanied by all those other assurances of fight which are so terrifying to the female ear, they imagined that some fresh enemy had pounced down upon their defenceless vessel, and while they betook themselves to those former supplications, in which their fears had previously found relief, Nora drew her child still closer to her bosom; and conscious that Eveline was upon deck, mourned in melancholy anticipation any mis-

fortune that might occur to a friend whose support and assistance she so highly valued, and who, from her good qualities, had become so much endeared to her. When, however, these sounds ceased, she endeavoured to persuade the female attendants to go up and see what was the issue of the conflict, and report on the safety of her supposed husband. This mission, after an ineffectual argument, the stewardess declined; and timid as Nora generally was, yet she was wrapping up to undertake this dangerous expedition herself, when the sound of voices on the cabin stairs induced her to pause, and in a few minutes Eveline herself was in Nora's arms.

"Oh, Heaven! I am so thankful," cried the latter, the tears gushing down her cheeks, as she pressed them against the pallid lips of Eveline; and then as soon as she found words for utterance, eagerly demanded, "Where are you hurt?"

"Nowhere, love," replied the sham husband, returning his wife's embraces, while something very suspicious twinkled in the eyes both of M. de Passoa and Spanker, at this mutual display of an affection so natural between two young people, as they thought, recently married, and evidently formed, both by the extreme beauty of their persons and the qualities of their minds, to excite in the breast of one another that intense yet tender interest which is at once the prerogative and the misery of Love. Had any stander-by insinuated the possibility of doubt as to their connexion being that of man and wife, with what incredulity would such a doubt have been received; had the doubt been believed, with what astonishment would the fact have been regarded! But with us, who contemplate their position from behind the scenes, what can be more natural than their conduct under the singular circumstances by which they were surrounded?

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## CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

### CATASTROPHE OF THE BAFFLED PRIVATEERSMEN.

Before our friends could obtain either supplies or assistance, they found themselves obliged to satisfy the curiosity of the ladies by rendering an explanation of the late fray. While Eveline undertook this duty, and met, to the best of her abilities, the sharp cross-questioning of Mrs. Archdeacon Pontifex, who particularly wished to understand the to her incomprehensible point why the Frenchmen should have wished to attempt this *émeute*, unless it were to carry off the person of herself, a second Helen—while Eveline was deferentially suggesting to this perspicacious lady that however desirable the possession of herself, there were also other motives that might influence the Frenchmen that they might possibly entertain some objection to enter an English port in war times, that they might have some little kind of doubt on

their own minds as to how far an English government would consider them prisoners of war, and that there might have flashed across their minds some kind of preference for taking their destiny into their own hands, as well as for enriching themselves with the cargo of the merchant vessel, by at once running the Prosperity into a French port —we say, that while this argument devolved on Eveline, the stewardess was busily occupied in mixing two glasses of grog, one of which Spanker insisted should be N N W, or two parts rum to one of water; and Spanker himself was playing the part of nurse, by binding up those wounds which M. de Passoa had gallantly termed scratches, but which, if meriting that name, were such scratches as only could be inflicted by a very powerful animal, with very sharp steel claws. With a look of the greatest philosophy, the first scholar in Europe sat quietly over the little stove which warmed the cabin, engaged, as usual, in reading no doubt a very instructive lesson from the smoke that so gracefully curled upwards, varied by the somewhat ungrateful alternation of curling most ungracefully and ungratefully downward, as some blast of the raging tempest, more powerful than the rest, puffed back its volume into the face of the equanimous contemplator, and caused sundry and several particles of the sea-spray to come trickling down into the fire.

These various little amusements were, however, suddenly interrupted by the powerful lungs of Captain Simpson at the helm, roaring out in a voice just audible through the storm, "Sail on the larboard bow!"

"I wishes her much joy of it," said Spanker, proceeding in his sanative operation.

In another second followed another and far different cry, and one which, on board a ship, is rarely if ever heard without emotions of the deepest horror and dismay.

"Fire! fire!" roared Captain Simpson, from the deck above.

"Vat is that!" suddenly ejaculated the French officer, starting up, and notwithstanding all his courage, perfectly aghast at this sound.

"Fire in the fore-scuttle," distinctly repeated Simpson, in accents but too plainly to be recognised.

"Those villians—de ship—in the fore-cabin," cried M. de Passoa, snatching up his sword, and darting on deck in such a hurry as to tear short off the bandage Spanker was still rolling round his arm.

"Polly, my dear," said the latter, without moving a muscle, "bear a hand with that glass of grog, or I may have to be off without it; don't pour the water in, in that extravagant way, or you'll drown the miller's thumb."

"Fire!" repeated the horrified servant, well knowing its consequences, and dropping the nicely-mixed tumbler of hot grog on the hearth, where it shivered into irretrievable splinters as she spoke; "Oh! if the ship's on fire, we're all lost."

"Look at that, you young she-lubber," returned Spanker, pointing with mingled pity and indignation to his lost but beloved punch, as it steamed in rich but fruitless fragrance from the planks on which it had been spilt; "suppose the ship *is* on fire, you young squaw, do you

think you can put it out by spilling my glass of hot grog on the decks. My maxim is, when the ship is on fire the crew ought to keep cool as long as they can; you've obligated me, young woman, to do a very ungenteel act by your infarnal carelessness;" and lifting the rum bottle to his mouth, Spanker, having fairly drained its contents, set it down again, saying with a sort of a civil growl,

"You seem, Polly, to have had a fire in your grog bottle—it's so dry—there wasn't but a short half-pint in it; but in times like these, I suppose, a man must be content with short allowance,"—drawing his hand across the corners of his mouth with a degree of elegance that peculiarly marked the seaman of the old school, Spanker at a single bound cleared the steps of the cabin, and rushed to the assistance of his friends, showing by this last act, that if he knew when to be deliberate, in moments of danger the part of energy was no less suited to his rude abilities and effective mind. On gaining the deck, Spanker looked around him for his superior, but seeing a rope's end hitched round the steerage wheel, he ran to the forecastle, and there, to his sorrow, beheld dense volumes of dark black smoke eddying out of every crack and crevice round the fore-scuttle, and thence drifting wildly away before the gale over the bows to leeward, while the deck itself had been rendered so intensely hot by the combustion below, as to render it scarcely possible to bear.

"Ah, mon Dieu, Spankaire, we are done at last," said the French captain, as Spanker came up, lifting his hands in dismay, and shrugging his shoulders at the same time.

"Well, your honour, if we are done, it'll be done brown, as the saying is, for it seems we're likely to have a jolly good fire to do us by."

"Vorse lock, Spankaire."

"Lock!" repeated Simpson, mistaking the Frenchman's word; "Ay, I believe we are, at a regular dead lock," rubbing his head with an air of deep perplexity. "I wanted to let out those poor devils down below there, but Mounseer says it's their doing, and swears they shall all be roasted alive."

"Do they not deserve it," cried M. de Passoa, with the most angry gesticulations; "the villains! they first tried to tamper vith the honour and the vord of a French gentleman. In order to do this, make one grand effort to murder their ally; next raise their swords against their own capitaine; finally, when everything fail, set fire to the ship. Croix de St. Jean! they have deserved death, let them be their own execution."

"Why, your honour, as to that," began Spanker, after a considerable emission of tobacco-juice, "I must say I thinks with my own skipper there, 'tis rather a hard sentence to be burnt to death; and, in the first place we don't know that we're right in accusing them of firing the ship a purpose; it may have been done by accident; and even it was a little bit of spite of theirs, we must make some kind of allowance, you know, Mounseer, for a man who has been well licked. I must say I was noways well pleased with you myself, when I found you'd got the better of us with that cussed Long Tom of yours."

"But you would not have fired a ship containing several beautiful helpless female, Mr. Spankaire?"

"No, I don't mean to say I should have gone to do any thing like that; there's no doubt, Mr. Mounseer, I might have been content with cutting your throat in a fair stand-up fight, or anything of that sort; besides, you see, great allowances should be made for a Frenchman."

At this last observation Passoa, who hardly knew whether to take it as a compliment or a reproach, stood silent.

"While you two are arguyfying the point, Captain Simpson, these poor devils below 'll be smothered; I say we ought to let 'em out. For even if they have fired the ship, they must have been precious sorry for it by this time; it'll do us no sort of good to smother our fellow-creatures like so many hornets; and once upon deck, it'll be as much their interest to try and extinguish the fire as our own."

"*Par exemple*, suppose they attack us again, and try to get possession of the ship?"

"Oh hang their attacks," said Spanker; "we've licked 'em once already to-night, and, by the holy man, we can do that again for them, if they partikerlarly wishes it; only do let the poor devils out; it makes my heart sick to think of roasting an enemy alive. Shiver my timbers, if I wouldn't as soon think of eating him arterwards; once let 'em out, and we'll soon extinguish the fire."

As Spanker said this, he approached the padlock to open the hatch, over which M. de Passoa still kept guard with his drawn sword.

"Extinguish the fire," repeated the latter; "once open de door and let in de oxygen of the atmosphaire, you will repent either in heaven or hell, as one of your great poet say; for every soul on board this ship will render their last account this night. Take off that vat you call and the fire is inextinguishable; the lives of those below are forfeited, even if they are not already gone. *Par préférence*, ve ought to consider those of de ladies below, de passengers, and ourselves."

"Cuss the passengers; they wouldn't fight," suddenly exclaimed Spanker, "they goes for nothing; there's only an old post-parson, and one or two others, down below, and who, like myself, whenever their cruise is up, have no right to complain of being paid off into ordinary; as for the ladies, to be sure, that's another question."

"Ay, Spanker," added Captain Simpson, "if I thought their lives were to be lost, I wouldn't say another word."

"The ladies below," said Eveline, suddenly coming forward.

"The ladies below," said Eveline, suddenly coming forward from the spot to which she had hastened on hearing the cry of '*fire*,' and whence she had listened to the whole debate, "would deem existence most miserable if gained at any sacrifice half so horrible as that of burning alive the poor wretches below. Open the cabin I entreat—I implore you in their name."

At this supplication, so urged, even the stern-hearted Frenchman seemed to hesitate, while the opinions of Simpson and Spanker gathered fresh strength.

There, Mounseer, you see what the young gentleman says, and as

he has a wife of his own on board, he ought to know all about it. Besides, Captain Simpson," turning to the latter, " there's poor young Sam below in his hammock."

" Ay, Spanker, my boy, so there is. Hang it, Mounseer, I never will stand by and see my own wounded burned up like an old woman's chips! Knock off the bar, Spanker. Come what may we must make an effort to save that boy; he stood by us as long as he could, without flinching; and now it is our turn."

" Vere good," said M. de Passoa. " I could have preferred a more honourable death than making part of one grand dish of *rôti*; but you have most to lose, Capitaine Simpson; and the death that has least glory requires the most courage."

Folding his arms upon his breast, and still holding his bared rapier so that it should be ready for defence in case of any sudden assault from those below, he saw Spanker suddenly cast off the bar—back flew the heavy hatch, forced upwards by the compressed state of the air, skin, and generated gases, within the cabin, and an awful jet of flame sprang up, at least twenty feet above the deck.

With a natural precaution our friends round the hatchway drew back several paces, not only to avoid being burned, but likewise from a natural doubt what might be the intention of the imprisoned Frenchmen below. To their great surprise, however, only one of these unfortunate people appeared, in the shape of some dark object, that burst suddenly from the blazing hatchway, more like a projectile from the mouth of a mortar than a human being.

" Sam! Sam!" cried the captain, " where are you?"

But poor Sam made no sort of reply.

" Garçons, garçons!" roared M. de Passoa in his turn; then thinking they might be fearful of opposition, changing this title into one more friendly, " Mes enfans, mes enfans, montez en-haut, dépêchez!" but still no other living being appeared. The terrific roaring of the vast volume of flame alone supplied any answer to their calls, and spoke in a voice sufficiently horrible and but too true the miserable fate of the rest of the unhappy wretches, who, imprisoned below, had with mingled atrocity and despair devoted themselves to one of the most awful deaths, and most brutal species of revenge, upon those conquerors from whom their treachery had so well deserved the defeat it met.

As soon as the horrified spectators beheld the unfortunate Frenchman spring upon the deck, they rushed towards him to soften his fall, and prevent his rolling overboard, from the excessive motion of the ship; and when Captain Simpson beheld him safe in the arms of M. de Passoa, he begged the latter to interrogate him relative to the fate of those below.

The increasing flames had, in the meanwhile, risen to such a height, and assumed such a degree of intensity, that the captain, and Spanker, and Eveline, were obliged to retreat from the hatchway, feeling something warm above their heads, through which it volleyed.

" What does he say, sir?" demanded Captain Simpson, going up to the gallant Frenchman, who was endeavouring to extract from the

rescued man some account of the fire, and the cause which originated it.

"Ay, your honour, what does young Salimander say?" added Spanker, gathering round the others; while Eveline also hastened to their side, with all that curiosity which some writers seem to point at as characteristic of her sex.

"Mon Dieu!" exclaimed the French captain, on hearing his countryman's account, "this is too horrible. Var is var, but this is only fit for de shambles."

"Why your honour," interrupted Spanker, "what is in the wind now? Isn't young Salimander done enough?"

"Vast heaving, Spanker, with your skylarking and nonsense, when here's the ship on fire, blazing away like a tarred rope before an admiral's carriage on a foggy day in London! Tell us, Capt. Passover, what is that fellow of yours saying?—what was the cause of the fire below, and is there any chance of putting it out?"

"The fire," replied the Frenchman, "was the act of revenge, and unless the sea puts it out, for us I fear ve have but de little chance! Those dom coquins were no sooner battened down below, than they shut von ship's boy vat you call him?"

"What, Sam?" roared the captain, with an oath of excessive rage.

"Oui, Sam," replied the Frenchman, "and having found some spirit in the cabin, they first drink all they could, and then throw de rest on a heap of rope-yarns, and set fire, to make one grand *auto da fea!*"

"Tarnation scoundrels," cried Simpson, not very delicately appealing to the other in his rage—"what the fury do you think of your countrymen now, Captain Passover, when they can go and do such a trick as that?"

"Mon Dieu!" and the Frenchman shrugged his shoulders—"the worst of every nation may be met at sea!"

"And have they skivered poor Sam's tripes, sir?" inquired Spanker with considerable emotion, he not having been able to distinguish, with any certainty, the real truth of M. de Passoa's statement, which was made in far more broken French than we have ventured to imitate. "*Par exemple*—oui! replied the latter."

"Poor Sam!" ejaculated Spanker, "who'd a thought he would ever have come to this! A wounded boy to be shivered alive in the dead of the night! The villains ought to be indicted for burglary; and if this isn't one of the clearest cases ever I heard tell on, why I knows nothing about the law, sir," turning to the horrified Eveline, who certainly did entertain considerable doubts upon the subject.

"But what does Mounseer say, sir?" demanded Spanker, energetically investigating the frightful transaction. "Where are the villains? are they down in the forecastle now, and all this here fire going on? If so be as that is the case, they may laugh at Old Nick himself, he'll never be able to hurt a hair of their heads after this."

"No, Spanker, you may well say that; but the murdering scoundrels have met their punishment. Captain Passover tells me that his French-

man says to him, in their salvage lingo, that as soon as they set fire to the ropeyarn, he clapped his mouth to a knot hole, which he found in the bulk-head, and so was able to get a supply of air, while the others, finding themselves stifled with the fire, tried all they could to force the hatch up; and finding that was a touch above them, fell down roaring and cursing upon the very yarns they themselves had set fire to."

"What then, your honour, are the cut-throats all dead?"

"Ay, Spanker, and no doubt something more to boot by this time; for even that poor blood there himself said he couldn't have stood it much longer; and as soon as we opened the scuttle, he made a clean bolt out."

"And a wery fortunate young man, sir, to be able to do it. Them Frenchmen always have such a spring in their legs, you might swear they always lives upon frogs at home, only from seeing the creatures' cleverness in running away. Look at the poor devil, without hair or whiskers, Mr. Soft-speech, doesn't he look more like a roasted apple than anything else?"

As these last words were addressed to Eveline, she turned to look at the dying Frenchman, for such he really was. Severely scorched and injured by the effects of the fire, the last instinctive hopes of life had concentrated all his remaining energies, for the accomplishment of the extraordinary efforts by which he had made his escape. But though this was in itself successful, the rescue came too late to preserve that existence which the previous fire, and the want of sufficient air, had so nearly extinguished.

Spanker had remarked, in his own rough way, that the sight presented by his disfigured body was horrible in the extreme. Faint and perishing for want of breath, he had sunk exhausted upon the wet booms; and as the ruddy light of the fire fell upon his reclining form, it displayed something which had once been a countenance, but which now looked rather like a mass of black and swollen flesh, with two bright and blood-shot eyes twinkling in the centre, and the rest of the features so puffed and distorted as scarcely to be distinguishable one from another.

The whole of the hair on the head—the eyelashes, and the whiskers, were shrivelled to a mere cinder, which crumbled into dust at the slightest touch of his swollen and blistered hands, as the poor fellow threw them wildly to and fro, in the agony of his sufferings, imploring, in his own language, for "water!—water!—water!"

The conversation, which in thus describing has occupied some minutes, passed in the frightful hurry of the moment in infinitely less time. In the meanwhile, the sorrow and astonishment of our friends at the atrocity thus disclosed, and the compassion which they felt both for their own shipmates who had perished below, and the poor victim who lay writhing at their feet, had for a brief space excluded from their minds the imminent danger which not only threatened themselves, but the lives of all on board. No sooner, however, did Captain Simpson ascertain the true facts of the case, and perceive that the past was beyond recall, than with his usual promptitude and determination he

gave himself up to the consideration of the future, and the preparations necessary for that struggle, which he was determined to make against those calamities which every instant thickened around him.

"It is a bad business, Captain Passover," said he, "but we shall not mend matters by grieving over them; so while Spanker, like a stout-hearted fellow, carries your poor Frenchman down to the cabin below, where the women will do the best they can to take care of him, let you and I see whether we can manage to clap a stopper on this fire, or at least keep it sufficiently under to let us run for the port to leeward; this will give us something like a scramble for our lives; and to make the most of it, we'll begin firing signal-guns of distress as soon as Spanker returns on deck, and see whether that ship that already looms so big, can lend us a helping hand."

"And suppose, M. le Capitaine, that we fail in all, vat shall we do then?"

"Why in that case," replied Captain Simpson, rubbing his hair somewhat lugubriously—"in that case, I suppose, there will be nothing for us but to put on our best gang of Sunday rigging, and a——"

"Arter that, your honour," interrupted Spanker, "get comfortably drunk, and so set off to Davy Jones's locker all together."

As Spanker arrived at this seamanlike, but somewhat questionable deduction, he stooped down to lift up the prostrate form of the Frenchman. A violent exclamation from the latter caused him suddenly to desist; while M. de Passou, catching the words, informed the old seaman that the scorched sufferer preferred remaining on deck, where the coolness of the gale tended to assuage his torment, to going down below amid the heat and effluvia of the ship's cabin.

"Ay, ay, your honour, I understand," said Spanker, "and I think he is in the right of it. I know myself I should say the same if I had had such a roasting."

"Then while you assist, Captain Simpson," interposed Eveline, who was standing by, "I myself will run down and bring the poor fellow the water for which he prayed so eagerly."

"Ay, do, your honour, that's a good-looking young gentleman, and be sure, sir, to put a good drop of brandy in it; for now what these Frenchmen call water they wouldn't give a chaw of bacca for Rachel's well, inless it was half-and-half, or north-west and by west at the least."

Eveline heard the old tar's instruction; but thinking they smacked much more of Spanker's doctrine than a Frenchman's abstinence, she contented herself with mingling a very slight portion of spirit with the water, which she brought rapidly back to the object of her solicitude.

## CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

### EFFORTS OF THE SURVIVORS TO ESCAPE FROM THEIR DEADLY ENEMIES, FIRE AND WATER.

"Now, Spanker, my boy, no time's to be lost!" cried the captain. "With so few hands as we have left, the only hope of extinguishing the fire is to clap the scuttle-hatch on again, and see if we can put it out by the want of air."

"Ay, ay, your honour," cried Spanker, seizing the scuttle and throwing it once more down upon the hatchway. But the previous heat of the combustion below, combining with the wet above, had caused it to warp so much and so quickly on its being first removed, that it no longer would fit the coamings; and when thrown down with this intention, long jets of flame streamed out of the various crevices.

"It's no go, captain," said Spanker as he saw this.

"But I say it shall be a go," replied Simpson, lifting and throwing over the hatchway a tarpauling which was lying on the deck, thoroughly saturated with salt-water, and which would, he conceived, effectually exclude the air without and suppress the fire within.

This for a few minutes certainly appeared to do; but the intense heat below soon driving off the moisture, and the fire in the fore-cabin being in all probability fed with air from some unknown quarter, the flames speedily burst through the insufficient barrier which had been opposed to their progress, and the inflammable materials of the tarpauling only added to the mischief it was intended to restrain.

It was now discovered that both the scuttle of the hatchway and the deck surrounding it were on fire. Simpson, Spanker, and De Passoa, now held a hasty consultation.

"Croix de St. Jean! we are lost at last," said the gallant Frenchman.

"That's very likely, Captain Passover," replied Simpson; "but still never say die! it's never too late to do that! it isn't a question whether we are lost or not; but whether anything more can be done to save the ship: Never say die! has always been my motto. I thought of it when I ran you down, and I think so still; and I have no doubt ten years hence we shall both be sitting over our fires in some snug corner of the world, thinking what a precious stew we were in on this blessed night."

"Vere likely, vere likely," sighed forth de Passoa with immeasurable length of face that gave the most audacious lie to this assertion.

"You don't seem to like it tho'," resumed Simpson, "but depend upon it we shall get out of this scrape by hook or by crook."

"Ay, my good friend, I vish I knew vich."

"Well, bear a hand with the fire-buckets, and let us begin to fling some water on the fire with heart and soul."

"That was what the rain-cloud said to Mount Ætna," interposed Spanker. "I was up the Straits seven years, and the rain hadn't been able to put out the smoke-jack when I left."

"Avast with your plaguy nonsense, Spanker; this is a time to be stirring, not to be playing the fool."

"I beg your pardon, Captain Simpson, but an old man-of-war's-man must have his joke if he lost his head by it. In my opinion there's only one way to save this ship from one devouring element, and that is to pitch slap into another."

"As how, Spanker?"

"Why, your honour, we've still got some way upon us—at any rate enough to steer by—and what I propose to do is to put the helm down every now and then as we come up on the swell of the wave, and so ship two or three good green seas forward. If that doesn't put the fire out below, we may give it up as a bad job."

"Well, Spanker, I believe that is the only way to deal with it. What do you say, Captain Passover?"

"I am vere moch resigned! I have lived to see Frenchmen disgrace the honour of old France! It is time, therefore, I should be content to die!"

"Old France be smothered! Let the old hag look out for herself. Do you think she cares a rope's-end about you? I'm big enough to eat you; and yet if I said a word about fighting, your long sharp toasting-fork would be out and ready to whip me through the witals in no time. Pluck your heart up man-alive—fighting is fighting all the world over—and who's Fate I should like to know, that you ought not to be ready to fight against he as well as any other individual? Come, come along aft to the wheel, and let's see what is to be done with you. If ever I have another craft of my own again catch me calling her Prosperity!"

"A wery fine pictur of prosperity this, sir," said Spanker, as looking round him the party moved aft to the steerage wheel with that degree of caution which the state of the wreck rendered so necessary.

"Prosperity," re-echoed the captain; "of all the infernal unlucky ill-omened——"

"I tell you I *will* go upon deck, Mr. Secretary! I tell you I have a very strong suspicion that all is not quite right; and if I don't see to it myself, I feel convinced that some harm will come to us."

"It's a pity, Mrs. Archbishop, you didn't think of that before, marm," rejoined Spanker in reply to this newcomer, whose voice still continued.

"I tell you, Mr. Secretary, I do believe that the smell of fire is increasing, and I insist on seeing it put out!"

At this authoritative mandate, Captain Simpson turned, and there beheld—Mrs. Archdeacon Pontifex—of course.

"I wish you may get it," growled the captain.

"O heavens!—fire!—murder!—call in the police!—call in the police!—they've set fire to my ship!"

"Do, madam, let me intreat you to go below—you can do no good on deck, and will only retard the efforts of others," reiterated Eveline.

"They've killed me at last—they've killed me at last!—I know I shall die!"

## CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

### IN WHICH ONE LAST CHANCE OF RESCUE PRESENTS ITSELF.

It was a truism which there was no withstanding. Even the unlettered Spanker felt its force. Mrs. Pontifex, on first clearly discerning that all her fears were realized in the burning state of the Prosperity, had broadly asserted that she knew she should die. To this, then, what was the feeling reply of the magnanimous old man-of-war's man?

"Very likely, madam; but you'll please to go below till your turn comes, because, you see, you're somewhat in the way here till then."

"Spanker, my boy, just take that old lady up in your arms and carry her down below, and then make fast the companion, till such time as the cabin begins to fill with smoke, for we musn't stifle the old woman," said the energetic but somewhat unceremonious Simpson.

"Old woman! you vile wretch!—Let me go, common sailor, I say, let me go directly. Didn't you hear him call me an old woman? Let me down; I'll soon prove to him—I will, I say, I will—I will—"

But what further depended on the will of Mrs. Archdeacon was lost amid the general uproar that arose from the cabin below, as soon as Spanker had safely deposited within it Mrs. Archdeacon, who certainly fired the minds of its designers as rapidly as the Frenchmen had ignited the ropeyarns in the forescuttle, but with less mischievous results, as nothing was easier than to keep the former under, though every attempt had failed, and seemed likely to fail, in suppressing the latter; for when the seaman returned to the quarter-deck he found that Captain Simpson had already put the helm down, to bring the ship's head up in the wind, in furtherance of their last desperate effort to quench the growing flames.

"There she comes round, my boys," cried the exulting captain, as he saw the ship's bows rapidly obeying the helm; "stand clear, and hold on fore and aft; here comes a sea."

As the captain uttered these words, the Prosperity, which had risen over one vast wave, shot down into the trough of another, with a rapidity of descent that made the heart thrill in the breast of each beholder, causing an emotion between sickness and fear. Down plunged the heavy bows deep into the dazzling foam, with a shock that made her tremble almost to dissolution in every timber of her frame; while as she staggered under the tremendous blow, and seemed struggling hard for life to mount again, a vast mass of dark blue water poured on her forecastle, rushed impetuously down the burning hatchway, and then came roaring along her decks, sweeping everything before it,—spars,—oars,—ropes, and wreck, in horrible confusion.

At the moment when Simpson had given the word of caution, Eveleen, who had remained on deck, was about to mount the poop, but looking forward and seeing the danger, had clung for safety to the nearest object—the capstan. Slight indeed was the only hold she could take here, that of her hands and arms on the projecting parts of the machinery. With an instinctive prudence, she had naturally placed her

only source of shelter between herself and the approaching danger; but as the resistless body of water came rushing on, even this precaution proved insufficient to enable her to stem the furious torrent. Saved indeed from any violent collision with the various hard substances thus borne onwards, and which might have terminated life at a single blow, with such force were they driven, she nevertheless found all her efforts to maintain her position against the current were vain. With an agony she had scarcely conceived possible, she felt her strength gradually yielding before the increasing pressure of the immense volumes of water eddying round her, and which, with instantaneous rapidity, mounted above her head, and, while inflicting all the pangs of drowning, fairly swam her off her feet. Moment after moment, in despite of her own previous hatred of life, did she still maintain her grasp, in futile expectation that the overwhelming flood would subside—still did it pour fiercely on—still did the agony of death increase with intense bitterness around her. At last, the certainty that the ship was sinking impressed itself upon her mind, and the dream of life seemed over. A light appeared to flash before her eyes, screams of horror and dismay filled her ears, her exhausted energies gave way, her hands unloosed their hold, she felt herself distinctly and bodily borne off by the tide of waters, and all became a blank.

"By Jove, there he goes," cried Spanker, who had fortunately caught sight of his young ally, "and we may manage to save him yet. I thought a slight youngster like that wouldn't be able to hold on against such a sea as this, and he with scarcely a pair of ship's legs on him yet." Catching hold of a small rope, and winding it swiftly round his left hand three or four times, he turned to Captain Simpson, exclaiming, "Stand by to give us a haul in board, your honour, presently;" then, without waiting for a reply, or to see whether his movements were even noticed, he leaped into the tumult of waters, and succeeded in grasping the light form of Eveleen, just as the impetuous waves, in the death-dealing sport of the tempest, were tumbling it over and over, as the ship slowly rose to the surface, and the refuse water rushed over the lee-quarter, bearing Eveleen with it.

"If that was not a narrow chance, I don't know what makes one," said the old seaman, as he laid his burden upon the capstan-head, and shook off some of the water from his hair and whiskers, drawing his breath at the same time with the manner of one who has had an opportunity of estimating the value of a good mouthful of air. "Ah, there they are at the old story again," he added, as he heard the most astounding din ascending from the cabin below; "there's old mother Archbishop at her chants again. I suppose she belongs to the church what had the gift of tongues, as I used to hear our parson tell about."

"I think that sea has dowsed the fire, Spanker," said Simpson, leaping down from the poop, and joining his faithful companion in misfortune

"If that ha'n't, sir, nothing will."

"What's all that row down there in the cabin, Spanker?"

"Oh, your honour, it is only that old she-bishop singing some of her anthems."

*Rap, rap, rap.*

"*Murder! fire! we're drowning—let us out*"—rap, rap—"*or we shall all be smothered.*"

"What's the matter below there?" demanded Captain Simpson, returning with interest the knocking that was heard on the under-side of the caboose, where distinctly were distinguishable the tones of Mrs. Archdeacon Pontifex, complaining, if her account was to be believed, that all the elements were in league against her. In answer to the query of Captain Simpson, that august lady replied,

"Let us out, I say, this moment."

"Is that some cantrip of the old beldame, Spanker, or do you think anything is the matter with them down there?"

"Lord only knows, sir. When women comes to her time of life, it's a wery delicate matter to pass any pinion on them. It is so difficult to say whether they are telling the truth, or whether they're using what they calls their privilages."

*Rap, rap, rap.*

"Let me out, I say, this instant, or I'll put you all into the Consistory Court. Mr. Archdeacon," this was evidently addressed to her fellow-sufferer below—"what do you stand there for, and see us murdered in this way! If it was brawling in a church, you would be ready enough; and what's that to this!"

"Well, well, my dear," the Archdeacon was heard to say, "if you think I ought to interfere,"—and then followed two gentle taps, such as a gentleman might give at a lady's dressing-room, and the shrill tones of the first scholar in Europe were heard uttering the name of Captain Simpson.

"Holloa," growled the rough sailor in reply, "do you intend to keep me pottering away here all night? when there is duty enough to be done in the ship for fifty captains, let alone one."

"Let us out then immediately."

"I can't, sir; you'll only be in the way, and do no possible sort of good."

"Well, Captain Simpson, if you place such restraint on my personal liberty, I shall certainly take the hint of Mrs. Archdeacon Pontifex, and put you into one of the ecclesiastical courts the moment the ship gets into port."

"I wish you would. I should not care what court it was, or blind alley either, provided there was a dry stone in it."

"If you keep us down here, you inhuman brute, we shall all be drowned," chimed in the untiring Mrs. Archdeacon.

"And you stand an equally good chance of it if you come up here," returned Captain Simpson; so it's six of one and half-a-dozen of another."

The shout that was here set up might almost have done grace to an Indian forest; and when this wild tumult had subsided, Nora's gentle voice was distinguished—like the spirit of peace in the storm—saying,

"For mercy's sake, Captain Simpson, unbar the hatchway, and let us get upon deck. If you keep us here many minutes longer, we shall all be drowned. The cabin's half full of water already."

"That's more like English, though not very pleasant news, neither;" then aside to Spanker, "Is that so, my boy? what can be the meaning of that?"

"Why, your honour, I suppose it must be so, if that young lady says it. I never found her given to any wagaries like Mrs. Archbishop, or whatever her name is; and how the cabin should come full of water I don't know. Maybe perhaps one of the dead-lights is washed in, and they, in their fright, have made the worst of it. At any rate, sir, it will do no harm to see. I must say, I have thought once or twice the craft was lying rather low in the water."

"Well, do you know, Spanker, so have I. We will have a look to this, for fear any accident may have happened. Open the hatch."

In obedience to the command given, Spanker undid the cabin hatchway, and the whole party that had stood ready on the ladder, rushed forth upon the deck. Such was the terror and devastation conveyed by the scene however, that several of them seemed inclined to go back again. Two or three commenced howling and beating their breasts in an agony of despair; and even the most courageous seemed to think they would have been almost as well below as they were on deck.

With a general caution to all parties concerned to hold on firmly for fear of being washed overboard, Spanker and the captain descended to the cabin, to investigate the alarm in that quarter. On almost the last steps of the ladder that descended into the berth they found the stewardess sitting, like one of the "Widows of Ashur, loud in her wail," while their worst fears seemed partly realised by the cabin being half full of water, which in that dark space plashed to and fro, dashing chairs, seats, &c., against the tables and bulk-heads, and producing as melancholy a picture as could well be imagined.

"Where did all this water come from, Nancy?" demanded the captain, addressing the stewardess, who was weeping bitterly, to all appearance, at what she considered her approaching fate. "You haven't cried it all, have you? though you seem to be hard enough at work for anything."

"Oh no, sir," answered the girl, who seemed to think a distinct denial necessary for such a charge. "I assure you I haven't. It all rushed in, sir, when the ship took that terrible sea."

"I don't see how that could well be, Spanker."

"Why, your honour, in this way:—the water may have carried away some of the bulk-heads, and so rushed slap aft."

"Well, if that's the case, and there is as much water as this fore and aft, Prosperity can't be far off from foundering."

"Why, no, sir," said Spanker, very leisurely, "I don't suppose she is. Moreover, sir, we have each had our day; and if our time's come, we have less reason to growl. We have had many an escape before now, and we fought this out to the last."

On hearing this philosophical conversation between her captain and his crew, the terrors of the unfortunate stewardess seemed to burst out into fresh despair. Flinging her arms one moment wildly above her head, then tearing forth whole handsful of her hair, and stamping with her feet upon the companion-ladder, she kept roaring out, "Oh my Thomas, oh my Thomas!"

"What's the matter with *your* Thomas now? who's touched *him*?"

demanded the unsophisticated Simpson, not very clearly comprehending her demeanour.

But the stewardess took no notice; on the contrary, she proceeded to call out on "*her* Thomas." But the captain, seeing that he made no answer, nor, as far as he knew, had ever been part of his crew, exclaimed,

"*Thomas!* why the woman's a fool. There's no such a name on the ship's books. What the devil! woman, are you married?"

"Oh no, no, sir," cried the stewardess, throwing her hands aloft with fresh energy; "I wish I had been."

"What use you could expect that to be of to you now I can't make out."

But the stewardess seemed inclined to no further explanation, and the privileges of a married woman in a foundering ship remained as little known to Captain Simpson as before.

"Tastes differ," said poor Simpson, sighing. "I wish to heaven I had never married, and then I should not be leaving a wife and family behind me this night. Where are you going, Spanker?" as the latter stepped down into the cabin, where the water was already so deep as nearly to carry him off his legs.

"Merely to bag that bottle of brandy, your Honour, which may help that young man coming to himself on deck."

"As soon as you have done that, then, follow me. I'm going to see if the fire is out forwards."

With this injunction the captain retraced his way once more to the deck, where the unhappy passengers were all clinging to such temporary matters of support as they in their exigency could discover, crying, bewailing, or submitting to their unfortunate destiny, as the separate nature of each dictated; while, regardless of all other danger, Nora, who had found the almost lifeless body of Eveleen lying on the capstan, was hanging round its neck with childlike grief and tenderness, imploring the utterance of a word that should denote existence, and endeavouring by every means in her power to produce what she implored.

"Captain Simpson—Captain Simpson," said a faint shrill voice near the mainmast.

The captain, as he passed the spot, turned to see who the appellant might be, and then recognised the first scholar in Europe, who had made shift to secure himself to the stump of the mast with the end of one of the fore-topsail braces.

"Well, sir," said the rough captain, "what's the matter?"

"Oh, nothing," replied the scholar. "I merely wished to know, Captain Simpson, if you think this is a *regular* gale of wind."

For a minute or two the captain stood perfectly still with astonishment. At first he certainly thought that the scholar had been quizzing him, and then, as the concomitants of the scene made this appear doubtful, he answered somewhat surlily, "If this isn't a gale of wind, I never saw one."

"Thank you. I merely asked for information, that I might put it down right in my diary."

"D— your diary," savagely returned Simpson. "It's a pity you can't be of more use. You won't find much time to keep a diary, I think, where we are going."

"Pray, where is that, Captain Simpson?"

"To the bottom." And with this abrupt answer, the captain, who, like Spanker, had never forgiven the passengers for their non-appearance in the time of need, passed on to the forecastle. When he arrived here, he found that during his absence the triangle, sail, and all, had been blown overboard; one of the spars having been lifted from its support on the deck by a part of the wreck which the sea had swept along in its fury. The captain next looked at the forescuttle, which, blackened and burnt all round the edges, still sent up a sullen column of smoke, like some half-extinguished volcano. The flames appeared, however, to have been arrested in their course, if not wholly extinguished.

While Captain Simpson was thus engaged, Spanker came up, and reported that the water was rapidly rising in the cabin aft, and proposed that he should descend into the forescuttle, and examine whether the bulk-heads had really given way. This proposition having been assented to, a rope was made fast to his body, and he was lowered down into the forescuttle, from which in a few minutes he returned to say that their fears had been correct, that the sea had made a clear passage fore and aft below decks, and that the ship was fairly water-logged.

"If that's the case, Spanker," said Simpson, "I suppose it is all up with us, and we only a few miles from a lee-shore, with not a rag of sail to steer by. I shouldn't care if we could see the Eddystone light; but what the devil's happened to it? it seems to have gone out!"

"Halloa! what row is that we hear, sir?" replied Spanker, without attempting any more direct answer to his superior's question.

"As I live," cried Simpson, "it's a ship dead to leeward of us, trying to claw off the shore, and by the size of her, a seventy-four, too. Hark! what a row they're making. They must be calling to us to get out of the way. As sure as fate, we shall be slap on board them; for how can we help it? We shall be slap on board them, I say, Spanker, and then down we go."

"Then the Lord have mercy on our souls, your honour."

"Blister their eyes, say I. Why don't they move out of the way themselves?"

Some shrill-repeated cry was here distinctly heard; but as its import was lost, and could not have been attended to even if understood, it of course produced no effect upon the guidance of the Prosperity, though her captain bawled out, "Why don't you put your helm down hard a starboard?"

As if in answer to this inquiry, a sudden blaze of light burst from the main deck of the seventy-four, and the contents of five or six guns simultaneously discharged, came whistling in idle wrath over the hull of the merchantman. Luckily, indeed, for all parties on board was it, that some miscalculation of the sea's rising or falling prevented this broadside from taking effect, and as it was intended, and as it most certainly would have done, sending her to the bottom without further suspense.

While yet Simpson and Spanker were endeavouring to bring together those jaws which surprise and astonishment had distended, seemingly beyond all further chance of ever meeting again, forward rushed M. De Passoa, crying,

"*Mon Dieu!* it is a French ship. They are crying to you to port your helm."

"D— their cries and d— their helm," roared Captain Simpson, flying into a violent rage the moment that he heard this intelligence. "The broad seas belong to old Britain; and I'll stand up for my birthright for all the French seventy-fours that ever skulked in port, tell them. Is this either decent or proper—to fire a broadside into a sinking craft in this way? I wish I'd something to return it them with, if it was only a popgun. Why *they're* under sail—why don't *they* put their helm hard a starboard?" Then as the wreck rapidly approached the seventy-four, he once more bawled as loud as he could,—"Hard a starboard, you land-lubbers, and don't be firing into us in this way, but fling us the end of a hawser, that our crew may escape."

Of course the whole pith of this observation was lost upon the Frenchmen, whose only reply was a repetition of their former answer, the discharge, namely, of a few more of their main-deck guns.

"*Mon Dieu!*" cried the Frenchman, who seemed to be actuated by a rage a very little less intense than that of his brothers in distress, "shall it be possible! They refuse to help us in our distress for fear we did endanger their getting on the lee-shore themselves."

"Well, well, Monsieur, that may be all very natural as far as it goes; but that does not warrant them in foundering a craft that is sinking already; and hang me if I don't pay them out for it. Here, Spanker, you run aft to the helm; and if you can contrive to make us fall foul of the Frenchman, do; while I stand by with this grapling with a hawser bent to it and try to hook on to her. Now I think of it, before you go, just hand me up that little bit of stream chain; I'll bend one end on to the grapnel, while you take a couple of clove-hitches on the hawser at the other end, so that if the French thieves try to cut it away they may be disappointed."

In a few seconds these preparations were made; and by the time that Spanker had got aft to the helm, the Prosperity's rapidly-sinking bow was within a few yards of the French seventy-four, which still inhumanly continued its fire at the wreck, in hopes of sinking it before any coalition could take place, being apprehensive that in such a gale an event so dreaded might be the means of sinking both. Still they were not justified in the means by which they tried to avoid that calamity. From the fact, however, of the Prosperity's hull lying so very low upon the water, all the shot which they aimed so profusely at her either struck the edge of the bulwarks, which were already too much injured to be further hurt, or bounded harmlessly above. The French seventy-four not being able, for the want of light, to distinguish this fact, could only perceive that the wreck still approached them. They were therefore at last compelled very reluctantly to put the helm down, and run up in the eye of the wind, as Simpson suggested. No sooner had they put this manœuvre in force, than a noise was heard equal almost to the

report of their own cannon, and every staysail they had previously contrived to set was flapped into ribbons by the wind. While the wreck of the Prosperity was driving rapidly to leeward, the stump of her bowsprit brushed the Frenchman's weather quarter; and Simpson, exerting all his strength, threw the grapnel so far forward as just to hook the Frenchman's rudder chains.

"There, you blackguards, if you can get out of that without helping us, do; but if you do I'm a Dutchman."

"Have you hooked them, sir? have you hooked them?" said Spanker, running forward.

"Ay, my boy," said Captain Simpson, grinning with as much delight as an urchin who has just caught his first gudgeon, "I have hooked them, Spanker, and deep in the gills too. If they don't break the gut they must come ashore with us."

"Ah, ah, my good friend," said the Frenchman, "I am fear you catch de Tartair."

As Passoa said this he pointed to a line of soldiers and gun-barrels, who, in all the dimness of that terrible moment, were very plainly to be seen on the poop of the seventy-four, pointing down upon the decks of the Prosperity.

"Croix de St. Jean! I shall get up and hail them."

"So do, Captain Passover, as you understand their lingo. Tell them they may fire and be d— ; but we will never let go our hold if they will not draw us up on board."

Accordingly the Frenchman began the communication, which in the state of the weather was no very easy task. But he had scarcely proceeded beyond one response before he again addressed the English captain.

"They desire me to tell you, Captain, if you had not instantly cast off they did shoot us all." "Tell them, with my compliments, they must learn to be better shots first; and that shot or not shot I won't cast off until they have hoisted every soul out of this craft. Why tell them, Monsieur, that there are women on board here; they never can be beasts enough to go on firing then."

"Ay, and please Mounseer to tell them they are young and pretty ones too," chimed in Spanker; then turning to Simpson, "For you know, sir, such an old and ugly piece of goods as Mrs. Archbishop couldn't be much worth picking up on such a windy night as this."

"No more it would. It's enough to raise a gale of wind to bring such a craft to sea. But come, let's make ourselves comfortable. These Frenchmen will begin to fire soon; and one of their stray shots may lodge in a man's little comforts before he knows of it."

As the captain uttered this elegant philosophic he seated himself under the lee of the forecastle bulwarks; and, Spanker following his example, they there awaited the negotiations between Monsieur Passoa and his countrymen.

"Cast off that tow-rope below there I tell you once again, or we'll drive a dozen balls through your body before you are three minutes older," hailed the officer from the stern of the seventy-four.

"*Mon Dieu!*" replied Passoa, answering in the same language, his native tongue, "what can I have to do with it? I am only a prisoner aboard."

"Haven't you a knife? cannot you cut the hawser?"

"If it were only a hawser I might, but it is a chain; and the first attempt I made would be a signal for my death. For the honour of our country bestow a few minutes to save these young and beautiful women who are on board here, if you have no compassion for the crew, of whom there are only two left, and all mine are dead except myself."

A pause of several minutes here took place as if a consultation were being held upon the taffrail.

"Has your honour said anything about the young women?" said Spanker from his crouching place below.

"I have just mentioned them, my good Spankaire, and I think it produce effect."

"Ay, your honour, I knew that would touch them up in the raw. Stick the young ladies into them. Mind you say how very particular handsome they are; and if there's any countrymen of yours aboard, I know they'll have us up. But not a word for your life, sir, about old Mrs. Archbishop, or they'll smell a rat directly."

At this moment another hail came down from the seventy-four. In an instant the Frenchman was all attention.

"Did you say you had any women on board?"

"Yes, five."

"How in the name of fortune are we to save them in such a sea as this? No boat that we have on board could live for an instant. Of what use can it be to hang on there at our stern?—we shall only both drive on shore."

On hearing this much more reasonable expostulation, the Frenchman interpreted it to the English captain, who desired him to answer he had a boat that would live in any sea if they would only fling them a hawser, and haul them up to leeward as soon as they were ready. Captain Passoa having communicated this intelligence, a second pause ensued; and at length a tardy promise was given of the assistance required, provided every haste was used.

"Ay, ay," said Captain Simpson, "tell them, Monsieur, they need not fear our being quick enough, when every minute we delay we stand an extra chance of going to the bottom. Since we have at last forced them to a little Christian feeling, ask them to throw us the end of a hawser, with a small mess breaker made fast at the end of it, that we may manage to catch hold. Tell them to bear a hand, for every sea that strikes us I expect we shall go down."

With a reply signifying that De Passoa had been long of this opinion, he very kindly translated the captain's request; and in a few minutes the end of a hawser, made fast to a small nine-gallon barrel, was let go from the seventy-four, and washed on board the wreck in the natural drift of the water.

"Here it is," said the French captain, as he beheld their little ark, "but I fear it takes us no farther off from the bottom; for how we shall get a boat to live in such a sea"—a shrug of the shoulders filled up the rest of the sentence, and expressed that despair which, though the worthy Gaul could not help deeply entertaining, he did not wish to utter, to the discouragement of those fellow-sufferers in misfortune, on whose exertions he felt that the lives of all on board must depend.

"If you don't know how to make a boat live in any sea, my boy, just you look on, and you'll be a little wiser for the time to come. We have put you up to a wrinkle or two already."

"By gar you have."

"Ay," chimed Spanker, with his usual broad grin, "if you look sharp, Monnseer, when you go back to France you'll be able to teach your grandmother how to suck eggs."

"Sock egg!" repeated the Frenchman, "Vat mean sock egg?"

"Oh it's only this fellow's never-ending nonsense," pointing to Spanker. "Come aft with us, Captain Passover, and lend a hand to rig our temporary life-boat."

With ready acquiescence, the Frenchman accompanied the other two aft to the poop, taking with them the hawser which they had cast loose from the breaker; and passing on their way the melancholy group of passengers gathered round the capstan. The fat Mrs. Archdeacon Pontifex was seated on the deck, wet to the very skin, and dripping in every robe; while around her were gathered three or four others, and her husband kneeling by her side, officiating in the way of chaplain, as far as he could persuade his memory to assist him with any orthodox implorations at the disastrous hour: however, his mind, naturally never very strong, was too much oppressed with the sense of present danger to go back with any sort of success to past duties; and the only particle of the Church of England rubric which he could at this moment recall, was the Collect for Rain; and, accordingly, there he knelt supplicating with all his might for this mark of favour, while the clouds were pouring down an incessant deluge: and for fear that should not be sufficient to meet his desire, a decent portion of every other sea poured its briny torrent over them.

"What are you about, Mr. Archdeacon?" cried his wife. "Do you forget that you are in my presence, that you commit yourself in this extraordinary manner? I don't want rain—I didn't tell you to ask for rain—one would think instead of the first scholar in Europe you'd been brought up all your life as a farmer, to hear you crying out for rain in this way, and I wet through to the skin already."

On hearing this expostulation, the first scholar in Europe paused a few seconds, looked vacantly in his wife's face, tried most ardently to recollect some more proper department of the ritual, and then utterly failing, went on once more to beg for rain. He would have rain, and nothing else would serve him.

"Gracious me, the man's gone mad! Captain, Captain," shrieking loudly as she saw the bulky form of Simpson coming forward; "My husband's gone mad!—stark, raving mad! As an archdeacon of the church I begged his services—"

"Well, ma'am, and very proper," said Captain Simpson, attempting to pass on, for he had kindly stopped to see if there were anything in her cries, "very proper for you to ask, and him to do it."

"But he hasn't done it, Captain Simpson. I tell you he does nothing but ask for rain."

"More sensible he, ma'am," gravely rejoined the captain, pursuing his route aft; "I can tell you it's no use to ask for anything else till the wind changes."

## CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

CONTAINS THE NOVEL LIFE-BOAT AND THE INCONSOLABLE HUSBAND.

"Now, Spanker, my boy, while I and Captain Passover clear out the boat, do you run down and bring up four large breakers."

Swift at the word the obedient seamen turned and ran below; while the two left on the poop got into the small cutter that was hanging on the quarter of the Prosperity, and cleared everything away preparatory to its being lowered down into the sea. This being done, as Spanker brought up the empty casks—technically termed "breakers"—from below, each was lashed at the end of a couple of stout oars; and four having been prepared in this way, two of them were fixed as outriggers on the larboard side of the boat, and two were placed on the starboard side. But as the ship was yet too close to allow of these being fairly got out, the barrels only were left hanging between the boat and the ship, ready to be projected to their proper position so soon as ever the former should get free from the latter. Thus was given a protection to the otherwise fragile bark, which not only rendered it next to impossible for her to be turned over unless the spars gave way, but made her so buoyant that even in case of filling she would be able to support her crew without going down. With that haste which was now so necessary, Spanker, when these arrangements had been completed, prudently shipped a small keg of spirits and a scanty supply of some other provisions, in case the seventy-four should by any accident either break the hawser, or, as the long-headed old seaman thought was equally probable, let them go adrift out of sheer spite. This done, the passengers were informed that they must take their places. No description can do justice to the scene which then ensued. In addition to the sketch which we have endeavoured to give of the group sitting round the companion hatchway, Nora, equally wet and dripping, stood beside it; and in addition to the task of clasping her own child to her bosom, was engaged in tenderly imploring the scarcely reviving Eveleen, who reclined upon the capstan-head, to sip the spirit with which Spanker had so kindly provided her. On being first told that they must trust their lives in a small boat, a flat denial was given by Mrs. Archdeacon in the name of the whole party.

"Indeed, sir, I shall never think of trusting myself in any cockle-shell of the sort; and I insist, Captain Simpson, that you stay on board your ship, and do your duty here in taking care of me."

"The ship is going down, ma'am; I don't think she'll live five minutes; and if you were the first lady in the land wanting me to see you down below in that fashion, I couldn't find it my duty to do so: that's the long and the short of it."

"Surely, my dear," mildly interposed the first scholar in Europe, "as the ship is sinking, it would be more comfortable to be at a distance during the operation."

"Sinking, you fool," said Mrs. Archdeacon, for the first time in her

anger forgetting—indeed we may almost say annihilating—the rank which it was ever her delight to set an example to mankind in respecting. "Sinking, you fool; do you think the ship will sink while I am on board her?"

"Why, my dear," said the archdeacon very quietly, "to be sure that might make a difference. Do you positively say you won't come?"

"No, sir, I will not."

"Then, Captain Simpson, I am ready;" and Mr. Archdeacon at once moved towards the poop.

"Stop, sir—stay, sir, I command you," cried his wife.

"Ay, there you go, ma'am," said Spanker, in an underbreath; "the more you keep calling the more he won't come," as he observed the archdeacon quickening his steps towards the stern, while the lady made haste to follow him.

"Now, my dear, put your arms round my neck," said the old tar, addressing himself to Nora.

"I do not require any support," said the heroic girl; "but if you will carry my poor husband, who I fear is almost dying with exhaustion, I will follow you."

"Very well, ma'am, any way you like, long or short, it's all the same to me;" and taking the faint and wearied Eveleen in his arms, Nora laid her left hand on his shoulder, while her right supported her child. In this way they walked quickly to the quarter boat, and took their stations. Nor were the French and English captains idle: one carried the bewildered stewardess, who all the way kept singing out, "My poor Thomas! my poor Thomas!" and the other bore Mrs. Archdeacon Pontifex's once spruce lady's maid, who now, sadly despoiled of her finery, insisted upon enlarging the stock of knowledge belonging to all on board, by crying out with considerable energy, and at very nice-timed intervals, "I know I have been a great sinner—I know I have." Behind her followed one or two elderly gentlemen, fat West Indian planters, one of whom for fear there should be any mistake on the subject perpetually lifted up his voice, and said, "Oh, Captain Simpson, this is an awful night!" while the man behind him occasionally endeavoured to knock the breath out of his body, saying as he did so, "If ever I get over this frightful peril I'll be a different man—a very different man!" This the last intended for a silent aspiration, but which, by-the-bye, everybody could have heard around, had not every body been too deeply engaged with their own woes to attend to the humiliating weaknesses of others. At last every one was seated in the boat but Mrs. Archdeacon; both captains, French and English, had endeavoured by every persuasion in their power to induce her to share the only chance for safety, and both equally in vain. Her husband perfectly knowing the futility of any application from him—at least it is but charitable to take this view of the case—contented himself with wrapping his wet boat cloak around him in as comfortable a manner as he could, and saying from time to time, "I am sorry you won't come, my dear:" then turning to the passenger who sat next to him—"It's very cold, sir, for the time of year."

At last Captain Simpson's warm blood was fairly roused, and seeing how the case stood, he roared out in a perfect fury, "I say, sir, it's d— disbecoming to you as a parson, if so be a archdeacon is a parson, to sit coolly there in the stern-sheets and leave your good woman to go down in this here sinking craft without ever saying one single word to show her what a d— fool she's making of herself. If you have any sarmint in ye, why the devil don't you preach it now? Surely the woman's life's worth saving, though she is so old and fat."

"Sir," said the archdeacon very slowly, "it has always been a point of honour and duty with me, never to interfere in my wife's amusements. My belief is that we shall all be drowned anyway: I prefer being drowned in this boat, she prefers being drowned in that vessel. It's a mere matter of choice after all; and I should not feel myself warranted in influencing my wife's inclination either one way or other, for if I were to persuade her wrong I should never hear the last of it, whether our next meeting should take place here or elsewhere."

"Well if you won't influence your wife's inclinations I will," gruffly cried Captain Simpson, somewhat unceremoniously seizing Mrs. Archdeacon round the waist, and trying to compel her to her own advantage whether she would or nay.

But quick as his movement had been, the excited state of Mrs. Archdeacon's mind was such, that she was equally ready in discerning his intention. Springing back with more strength than he could possibly have given her credit for possessing, she kicked, and screamed, and struggled in the most determined manner, uttering all the while cries of so agitating a nature, that any hearer might fairly believe she considered her murder as among the most trivial of the offences meditated against her. In vain Captain Simpson endeavoured to lift the lady in his arms and leap into his place in the boat. What with the motion of the vessel and his weighty burden, he twice very nearly precipitated himself into the water; while, to crown his confusion, the seventy-four, angry at the long delay, fired two guns in quick succession, the balls of which hissing over the stern of the Prosperity, gave a very forcible hint of the temper of the French officer, and the danger of trifling with it.

"Well," said Captain Simpson, resigning his hold round the waist of Mrs. Archdeacon, "if you won't, you won't, and there's an end of it. I've done my duty in trying to get you out of this poor water-logged craft, and now you may stay aboard for all eternity, for me! If Neptune's of my mind, there's not much fear of old Prosperity going down. For what the devil they'd do with you in Fiddler's Green I'm hanged if I know. One such woman is enough to upset all the discipline in the world. There, make way for me, Spanker, in the boat, and stand by to lower away."

As the captain said this he took his place in the stern-sheets, and at his signal Spanker began to lower the foremost fall tackle, while Simpson did the same with the aftermost.

"It is von great pity, sar, that your lady vill not come," said the Frenchman.

"Rather, sir," replied the Archdeacon; "because if she has to remain long on board, I think she may feel lonely."

"Oh, vary lonely, vary lonely, indeed," and Captain Passoa shrugged his shoulders. "Even de cat, he come aboard de boat. Maddam will have nobody but de rat to make de society; the rats poor company! vary poor! But your good lady, she seem equally as moch distress to stay as to go, and to go as to stay,"—seeing that Mrs. Archdeacon continued to roar just as lustily now the boat was lowering, as when Captain Simpson had his arm round her waist.

"Yes, sir," said the first scholar in Europe, in answer to this last remark, "it is natural to expect that in a woman who is all sensibility." Mr. Archdeacon, after the last expression of his opinion on the wife of his bosom, fell back in the stern-sheets, and contemplated the bottom of the boat with all that philosophy with which he always regarded, when on shore, the eddying of the fire-smoke.

No sooner did the cutter touch the first crest of water than the captain, with a loud voice, shouted, "Unhook."

Quick as thought Spanker replied, "Ay, ay, sir;" and, in accordance with the word, disengaged the bow of the boat from the foremost tackle, while Simpson himself, with equal readiness, cast off that one nearer aft.

Scarcely had the little craft felt herself once more in her own element than she swiftly glided away from the ship's side, sucked down as it were into the trough of an enormous wave, and then glancing on to the crest of the next with the utmost velocity, like some enchanted being, that having been too long imprisoned, no sooner regains its own liberty than it becomes perfectly wild with delight and motion.

"Out with your starboard float, Spanker," cried the captain, "without losing a moment. You secure yours forward, and I'll do the same here astern."

In a few seconds the two oars on the right-hand side, which the proximity to the ship had not yet allowed to be brought into play, were, with the small kegs lashed at the end of each, thrust out, and lashed fast. Up to this period, nothing could exceed the awful nature of those few seconds which had elapsed since the lowering of the boat, to all on board. In silent terror they had felt themselves gradually sinking down from the ship's side, where a single unlucky movement, one break of the sea, the slightest awkwardness in unhooking the tackles, or the giving way of any of the fastenings, would have precipitated every soul on board into the raging element beneath, from whence escape would have been utterly impossible. When, however, they found themselves not only afloat, but their boat actually living in the sea, they began to consider that there was some fair chance of escape; and the thoughts of each, hitherto engaged in the absorption of individual life or death, had power to take in the surrounding circumstances of the scene. The first object that now attracted their attention was the lonely Mrs. Archdeacon perched upon the taffrail of the wreck, shrieking and shouting with all her force, and waving her arms in the gale like the sails of a windmill.

"Ah, you old fool," growled Captain Simpson, very angrily, "when I wanted to sarve ye, ye wouldn't let me."

"Mon Dieu!" said the Frenchman, "she is beg us to take her on board, Captain Simpson."

Simpson took no further notice of this information than to bawl out lustily, "Spanker, haul ahead."

"Ay, ay, sir," returned the old tar, who, with his eyes fixed on poor Mrs. Archbishop, as he called her, did not seem in a great hurry to withdraw from the unfortunate woman her last hope of life.

"What is yon elderly lady saying?" demanded one of the passengers, a Scotchman, from behind his comforter.

"She's changed her mind, and asking us to take her on board," replied another.

"It appears to me," joined in some one else, "that she is calling out to us to take care of some danger that we are in."

"No, sir," said the first scholar in Europe, without lifting his eyes from the bottom of the boat, or in any way disturbing that equanimity which established his title to the claims of philosopher. "She says that the wreck is rapidly going down."

Captain Simpson lifted his eyes at this declaration, "By the living man, so it is! Spanker, vast heaving there. Captain Passoa, Mr. Archdeacon, seize an oar for your lives. Will you see your wife go down before your eyes, without putting out a finger to save her, and be d—d to ye—God forgive me for saying so. Leap, ma'am, leap," addressing the agitated woman, who, under the influence of momentary horror, darted to and fro, now to one part of the poop, then to another, shrieking and screaming, and tossing up her arms, calling in her agony on every one, in turn, to save her, and not knowing what to do, or where to pause for a moment.

"There she goes," cried Captain Simpson, almost equally frantic with the excitement of the scene, "poor old Prosperity, there her bow dips—down plunges her bowsprit. Pull, Spanker, pull, for your life; pull the bow oar—there she goes at last. Pull, Captain Passoa, that's a jolly Frenchman. Leap, ma'am, leap as near the boat as you can, and we'll pull you in. By G—, she doesn't hear me. If she doesn't leap now, she'll be sucked down as sure as fate. Leap, ma'am—leap for your life!" shouted the warm-hearted and energetic captain, in a still louder tone, which not even the roaring of the gale could drown. The unfortunate woman heard the cheering sound as she stood irresolute upon the poop of the foundering vessel, whose bow was already madly plunging amid the boiling surf, and whose poop was elevated at an acute angle towards the sky. Another instant, and the wreck would have taken her final surge below, and rendered futile every effort to escape.

At this critical period, the friendly voice of Captain Simpson reached her ear—desperation lent her courage; and while the rapid exertions of the three seamen had brought the boat as near the stern of the Prosperity as the safety of all would permit, she very wisely shut her eyes, and springing with all the strength in her power, in the direction of the boat, fell heavily down into the raging sea.

"Bravely done, by the lord Harry!" cried Captain Simpson, dexterously thrusting an oar down under the falling body, to arrest its descent, which the quantity of clothes also greatly impeded. "Now,

Captain Passoa—now Spanker, my boy, shift your oars, get away from the vortex. There she goes—there she goes, by Jove; she's gone at last! Poor old Prosperity!!"

Simpson, who seemed unable to withdraw his eyes from the sinking ship until the black mass shot swiftly down the agitated foam, gazed for an instant on the vexed surface of the water where she had so lately floated, and then drawing his rough arm across his eyes, with as much feeling as if it had been a human being or favoured friend, which had perished, exclaimed, with a sigh, "Poor old girl, her troubles are all over!"

"What, sir!" said the first scholar in Europe, quickly looking up, "have I lost poor dear Mrs. Pontifex?"

Captain Simpson, who had succeeded in getting hold of the lady's hand, appeared too savage to make any reply; but Spanker, taking the matter up, in his usual modest manner made answer, "Nothing is lost, your honour, while you know where to find it; the good lady is still in the sea."

"Alas!" groaned the archdeacon, "this is a night of heavy losses, indeed—all my extensive outfit and my wife gone."

"Don't consarn yourself, sir, about the latter," maliciously added Captain Simpson at this juncture, "your wife's not likely to go yet this many a year, I can tell you,"—then as another gun was heard from the seventy-four—"Ay, ay, we are coming, Spanker, haul ahead, my boy, as fast as you can. It's a heavy piece of goods, this, Captain Passoa."

"It is, sare, indeed," replied the Frenchman. And after one or two heavy groans, and as many severe pulls, Mrs. Pontifex, more dead than alive, was pulled on board the boat, and the two seamen then joined their efforts to those of Spanker, in hauling the boat alongside the seventy-four. After the lapse of some time, and the exercise of considerable patience, this was at last effected; but not before a vast wave poured its full contents among the unfortunate passengers, and filled the boat to overflowing. Owing, however, to the care taken by Captain Simpson, it still remained buoyant; and one by one, the party from the wreck were put in slings, and hoisted over the stern of the larger vessel, when the water-logged cutter, whose qualities as a life-boat had been so severely tested, was rapidly cut adrift, and Captain Simpson, with no more property in the world than those in which he thanked God for his deliverance, was the last to be hoisted up to the quarter-deck of the seventy-four.

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

### THE PLEASURES OF A LEE-SHORE.

"THANK God, here is something like a dry plank at last," exclaimed Captain Simpson, as he leaped down from the hammock-nettings of the seventy-four, on which were gathered all the officers of the ship in a semicircle round one man, who appeared to be their superior.

"Ah! here is de mate," said Captain Passoa, in a loud voice, then quickly whispering in Simpson's ear, "remember you was no longer the captain who was drowned on board de wreck, if you wish to save your life. You shall maintain that you are only de mate."

"Why what's up in the wind now?" replied Captain Simpson, beginning, and with much justice, to fear that his troubles were never to have an end.

"Ah, my good Captain Simpson," replied Passoa, "I did warn you, you have catch'd de Tartare, the French commandant on board here has sworn he shall flog de English captain for fastening on his rudder-chain."

"Will he though?" energetically exclaimed the Englishman; "just point the cowardly blackguard out to me—I'll knock his teeth down his throat."

"Patience, patience, my good friend, or you shall undo all that I have effected. Ah! here comes some one to examine you. Stick to my story, and you shall be safe. The captain was dead, and you not responsible."

As Passoa said this, there came up the hatchway an old-looking man in the French uniform, who, having first saluted the French commanding officer, turned about, and demanded of Captain Simpson how it was that he had dared to run foul of a French seventy-four.

"Oh!" said the unblushing Simpson, fully up to the manœuvre, "I had nothing to do with the matter: I was only the mate. The captain commanded on board."

Having stoutly adhered to this statement, he was next asked what had become of the captain.

"Worse luck to the wretched day, he is gone down in the craft that foundered astern. All that we could say or do, we could not prevail on him to quit the poor old boat. You see, sir, she was his own property: she was the first, and I suppose in all human probability she will be the last ship of his own that he will ever command; and whether it was from this, you see, or whether, perhaps, he didn't feel himself able to abide the smell of a French ship's decks, unless he walked the planks as prize-master, I can't say; but he stoutly declared he'd rather go down in his own craft, than be saved in yours: so you see he's kept his word."

As nothing more than this audacious statement could be got from the

stout-hearted Simpson, the Frenchman seemed to abandon his former kind intentions of flogging him; and after bestowing on the Englishman a volley of the choicest oaths in the French language, of which Captain Simpson in the serenity of his ignorance did not understand one single word, our male friends were allowed to go below and avail themselves of such rude hospitality in the way of blankets and refreshments as the crew of the seventy-four were, under the circumstances of the moment, enabled to offer.

This little episode in their own adventure being thus terminated, the officers in the French man-of-war redirected their own energies to the safety of their ship. Certainly a far more agreeable position might have been chosen for the vessel than a lee-shore and frightful gale, which wooed her on either side: on the other hand, it would have been a gross neglect of duty had the Frenchman persisted in his resolution not to afford such succour as lay in his power to the crew of the foundering Prosperity. It was now for the first time that the latter discovered how greatly they had been mistaken in their own supposed position: instead of their being in the throat of the Channel, and somewhere off Plymouth Sound, they now learnt that the land to leeward was the South-Western coast of Ireland; and the light, which was by them supposed to proceed from the Eddystone Lighthouse, was in fact nothing less than one of those treacherous beacons which the wild people of that coast used to kindle along the deadly heights of their rocky shores to increase the number of those shipwrecks by which they reared their wretched fortunes upon the destruction of others. This at least was the account given by the French officers, who having taken their departure from the Irish coast the preceding day, when they were hotly chased by two English men-of-war, seemed to be perfectly aware what portion of the land was then in sight; and as they had possessed themselves of some of our best charts, there certainly was no kind of lighthouse laid down anywhere near the spot off which they supposed themselves to be.

Horrible as this charge of wrecking appears, and matter of history as we trust it is now for ever become, there certainly was one circumstance which appeared to bear out the assertions of the French officers, namely, that the light, instead of being stationary, as in a lighthouse it must have been, was in the present case plainly perceptible by the compass as changing its position, not in a gradual continued manner, which would have been accounted for by the drift or progress of the ship, but rather as though the beacon were dependent upon the capricious movements of some living body. This the beholders explained by reference to the well-known melancholy truth that wreckers, both on the Cornish and the Irish coast, are in the habit of fixing a strong light on a horse, and walking the animal on the edge of a cliff in such a manner as may be best suited to their project of betraying the unwary mariners who might steer their vessels by such deceptive rays.

Stripped by the gale of every atom of their property, almost dead with exhaustion and exposure, and deprived of their liberty as prisoners of war,

our friends yet found they had one point on which to be thankful to Providence that had preserved them from the horrors of being driven upon the rocky coast, where the murderous arm and unpitying spirit of the wrecker were ready to extinguish every spark of life, and rifle every particle of property that the fury of the tempest might have spared. Far better than such a fate would it have been to have foundered on the deep; while comparing it with their present lot, their position on board the French man-of-war seemed happiness itself. As amid every partial lull of the storm, the deep and distant thunder of the surge beating to leeward came distinctly on their ears, they silently returned their thanks for the escape they had already experienced, and implored a continuance of the same protection from horrors that could gain little additional terror from the aggravation of their fancy. Accustomed as the dwellers upon land are to magnify their petty griefs, and cavil at the unavoidable sorrows of existence, how little do they imagine the magnitude of those ills which darken the horizon of life through almost every hour of its existence, to those who are defending their property and securing their freedom upon the perilous wastes of the ocean! It is amid scenes like these that a real philosophy is learned, which the study of the scholiast or the pride of the sage could never yet inspire or support.

As if to mark to the overweening arrogance of the French captain how insufficient human knowledge was to declare what should most promote or endanger his safety, our friends had scarcely been taken below from his quarter-deck, before the wind slanted round a couple of points to the westward, and the storm-staysails having been once more replaced, the seventy-four was enabled to stand fairly across the spot of land near which had been seen the treacherous beacon.

As the stately vessel drew slowly ahead through the tremendous seas which rolled in to the shore with all the impetus of the mighty Atlantic behind them, her top-gallant masts struck, her bare yards pointing to the wind, and nothing but a few triangular specks of canvas shown to the gale, they formed the only human means of safety that her crew were able to interpose between the gale and the destruction of the twelve hundred souls on board, while the intense and awful feeling of her officers and men, thus standing as it were on the brink of eternity, no human conception can exceed. The lapse of a few minutes more would now determine beyond all doubt whether their corses were to line the shore, the sodden and mutilated fragments of humanity, or whether they were yet to hope for a renewal of that life which the minds of so many now accused them of having spent to little or unprofitable purpose. With each passing moment the roar of the distant waves became more and more deafening as they resounded along the bases of those granite mountains on which they had howled and foamed from the hour that chaos subsided into form. The spirits of the countless numbers who had there lost their lives during the lapse of ages seemed to ride upon the blast, and filled the air with mournful wailings as each terrific gust of the storm swept over their bending masts and trembling hull. The long white line of foam grew more and more distinct to their anxious and

agitated vision; the abrupt and frightful cliffs rose higher and higher with each advancing moment, as the set of tide and the power of the prevailing element drifted them gradually towards the fatal line where the boundary of all their lives was irrevocably set; still the false light seemed as distant as ever: as though delighting to mock their enduring agony, it gradually retreated further and further inland, and strove to cheat them into a belief that danger was more distant than it appeared. During this brief but fearful period all the officers and crew, the numerous passengers, and the various companies of troops that the seventy-four was carrying, thronged the upper-deck of the jeopardised ship, unable to withdraw their glances from the horrible spot where the rocks and waves seemed battling for the prerogative of swallowing them up alive. Some, the dangers of the surrounding scene awed into silence; others it moved to tears: one party gave way to frantic exclamations of despair; a fourth endeavoured reasonably to discuss the probability of their escape. Whatever faults might belong to the captain, want of resolution and firmness were certainly not among them; but the fieriness of his nation and savage traits of revenge shaded what would otherwise have been a bright character. Instead of viewing the favourable slant wind which had enabled him to improve his course as a sort of compensating balance for any position he might have lost in saving the crew of the Prosperity, the unreasonable part of his disposition made him even view this advantage through a distorted medium.

"If it had not been for those English beasts, we should now have been safe with this change of wind; as it is, ten minutes more and the ribs of the Censeur may be breaking up into firewood for the cabins of the Irish peasants. It is well for that fool of a captain that he spared himself the trouble of coming on board here, for ——." What followed and formed the conclusion of this threat did not, it is to be hoped, reach the ears of the officer to whom it was in French addressed, or he would not have been guilty of the unnecessary cruelty of replying.

"As to the captain, I am told, sir, that he is on board at this moment, and below; and in fact he it was who passed himself off as the mate."

"What!" said the French commander, whose growing excitement seemed suddenly brought to a climax by this information, "how did you learn that?"

"Your steward tells me that it has come out through the ladies in the cabin."

"Go in person this instant," cried the captain; "take Joudin with you to interpret, and ascertain the fact without a moment's delay."

The French officer on hearing this command seemed for the first time aware of the gratuitous unkindness of which he had been guilty, and in a tone of remonstrance began to reply—

"At this sad moment, sir, surely it cannot avail to——".

"Do as I order you this instant, sir," replied the captain, in a tone of fury that permitted no hesitation on the part of his inferior.

Accustomed to witness the outbursts of passion that characterised the French commander, the lieutenant already foresaw that some mischief was engendering, and knowing that no small part of the blame was attributable to himself, moved leisurely onwards to the fulfilment of the commands imposed upon him, trusting that the delay might either enable his superior to regain his tranquillity, or, if they were doomed to go on shore, that such a dreaded catastrophe might not be rendered needlessly horrible by any useless cruelty to the unfortunate men who had, as he conceived, a very fair claim on any passing ship for succour and assistance.

These kind designs were, however, frustrated by the French commander sending after him a second officer charged with the same odious duty, and charged moreover in a special manner to use all the haste in his power. In a few minutes then these two, accompanied by Joudin, who acted as interpreter, entered the cabin, which had been temporarily given up to the use of the ladies, and whom they now found ignorant of the new danger which threatened them, safely reposing in some hammocks which had been hastily prepared for their reception. Having pronounced the name of Mrs. Pontifex, that lady, whose self-importance seemed rather flattered than alarmed by her coming into such extraordinary demand, briskly replied, "that there she was"—rather an unnecessary assertion, when we take into consideration the bulk of the speaker. As a temporary screen had been hung up round their hammocks, the other ladies with one accord begged Mrs. Archdeacon not to let the officers enter, but to parley them from the outside. Mrs. Archdeacon, however, had through life cherished a strong notion, that of all known costumes, that in which she appeared to the greatest advantage was her nightcap; this, therefore, combining with the strong request made by her friends to the contrary, induced her at once to give an invitation to the officers to enter. The Frenchmen, no way loth, at once obeyed the summons, and the ladies in another second had the pleasure of holding a royal levee round their sea-couches. Evelyn and the other females, unaccustomed to this honour, at once hid their faces as they best might; but Mrs. Archdeacon, who was fortified not only by her nightcap without, but also by a very considerable nightcap within—to wit, one glass of water and brandy—raised herself bolt upright in her hammock, and with a most fascinating bow and smile to correspond, said to the officers, "I am much obliged to you, gentlemen, for the honour of this visit. What ——" but before she could get any further, M. Joudin demanded in his broken French if she could tell them where the captain was.

"Don't answer that question, Mrs. Pontifex," exclaimed the sharp-witted Nora, who, without being able to explain her reason, clearly perceived that some danger lurked in the inquiry, from the circumstances under which it was made. Cunningly as the question was itself devised, had Mrs. Pontifex given herself time to reflect, she also would have seen the matter in the same light, for she was by no means deficient in quickness when the other qualities of her disposition did not interfere. In the present instance, drawing herself up in the most dignified

manner, she made answer to Nora, "After the way in which your husband has neglected me this night, I am surprised, madam, that you should presume to ask any favour at my hands;" then turning to the French officers, "Gentlemen, I am most happy to repay you by any information in my power for the attention with which you so kindly stopped your large man-of-war to rescue me from that sinking vessel. I do not know where Captain Simpson at present is; the last time I saw him——"

"Pause! pause! Mrs. Archdeacon, I implore you," resumed Nora, timidly uncovering her lips to give utterance to these words; "remember the violent scene with the captain of this vessel when we came on board; if these officers mean no harm, what can they want with Captain Simpson? and if they do mean any harm—if they do mean evil, leave them to work it by themselves."

"Child!" angrily replied Mrs. Pontifex, "I am surprised at your presuming to direct me; I always speak my mind; I have no concealments; Captain Simpson has behaved to me like a brute. What kindness have I ever received from him—what attention—what civility?" Then turning to the French officers, "As I was about to tell you, the last time I saw the captain was when he came on board the ship this evening."

"Thank you," replied the Frenchman, moving to depart, as if this was all the information they desired; then pausing for a moment, Joudin inquired, "How you say shall he be dressed?"

In reply to this, Mrs. Archdeacon described the bulky form of the unfortunate Simpson, together with the various habiliments hung thereupon, which was all that the Frenchmen desired. For the sake of certainty, however, they put one final question—

"Was you say his name shall be Sampson?"

"Not Sampson, but Simpson, gentlemen."

The Frenchmen nodded their heads, dropped the screen, and departed; while Mrs. Archdeacon, repeating her most winning bow, laid her nightcap on the pillow with the head in it, quite convinced that she had done one of the most clever things in the world—to say nothing of the decided conquest of three Frenchmen at a single *coup*.

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## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

### SUMMARY JUSTICE AT SEA.

While this scene was enacting in the ladies' cabin—while all the strife of passion and revenge was filling the bosom of the French commanding officer—while the strength of the tempest, the violence of the ocean, and the howling roar of the rocky shore, were contending for the destruction of the seventy-four, let us descend upon her lower deck, and see what were the occupations of our friends below. Evelyn, together with the first scholar in Europe and the other passengers, thoroughly

wearied, and almost as ignorant of the danger that threatened them as the ladies above, had all without scruple availed themselves of the accommodation that had been kindly offered by the ward-room officers, and having each of them taken some stimulus and refreshment, they were already fast asleep. Spanker, Captain Simpson, and M. de Passoa, had, as we have already said, been provided with hammocks on the lower deck; of these the two English seamen instantly availed themselves, and were fast in their first nap within two minutes of laying their heads on their respective pillows; when Passoa, who after swallowing some spirit and a biscuit had returned upon deck, and there beheld the imminent peril that each moment more and more closely threatened those on board, came running down to the hammocks of his two captives and friends in adversity, and laying a hand on the shoulder of each, cried out in a tone of great alarm, and somewhat worse English than ever, "Capitaine Simpson—Vat, Spankaire, diable! How you go to sleep when the ship shall strand on a lee-shore in von minute?"

"Can't help it, my good friend, if she will go she must, bless her old timbers. Tell her, with my compliments, she won't better herself if she does."

"Vat diable you sleep still, Capitaine Simpson? de ship on de lee shore, I tell you."

"Very good," replied Simpson, in an elongated snore of the most unquestionable drowsiness.

"Croix de St. Jean!" exclaimed the Frenchman, stamping on the deck with vexation. Then turning round to the seaman, and giving him a shake that might have roused the seventy years' sleeper in the Arabian Nights, "Spankaire, Spankaire, the ship is going on de shore I tell you."

"Is that all?" growled Spanker, turning on the other side.

"Why for you not turn out, Spankaire?"

"I've got a dry hammock for once, and I wouldn't turn out of it for the finest lee shore in Christendom."

"Mon Dieu!" cried the Frenchman, "est-il possible!" Then renewing his attack upon Simpson, "Sare,—mon ami, will you not try to save your life?"

"'Tisn't worth saving, when I've lost my ship," mumbled poor Simpson.

"But," said the kind and persevering Frenchman, "try one last swim for it. You shall gain a ship again; but you could not get on well without your life. Come, come on deck."

"I'm not captain of the ship, I tell you; and idlers are at liberty to be below."

"But I tell you de ship is sinking."

"Still it's a matter of choice," muttered Simpson; "I prefer to sink in my hammock; I have had enough of deck to last me for a twelvemonth; don't disturb me, that's a good fellow; time enough to turn out when the ship strikes; if you knew how sleepy—how very, very—" here the captain was fast asleep once more.

"*Quelle folie! quelle sottise!*" exclaimed the astounded Frenchman,

lifting up his hands in wonder; then once more reverting to Spanker, whom he could not believe to be cognizant of the danger, he took hold of Spanker's queue, and giving it a sharp pull till the seaman started up in his hammock wide awake, he exclaimed, "Spanker, you bête, don't I tell you the ship shall founder in von minute?"

"D— your sister's mother's cat's tail, Mounseer, what's that to me? don't you see that I'm only a passenger? Do let a fellow alone when he's got a chance of a snooze; and as to the ship's foundering, I dare say I shall know nothing about it if you'll only keep quiet, and if I don't so much the better, tisn't a matter of much consequence. But there's one thing that does give me considerable consarn, if you walleys my friendship, and that is, Mounseer, that you mustn't go again to lay hold of my tail in that way, for a fellow's tail is a thing that every English seaman is very particklar about, so I tell you. No offence to you, Mounseer, as I dare say you meant it all for the best, thinking the ship was going down, and so on; but going down or going up, we English seamen takes thirteen of them to the dozen; and as we are paid for it when they comes, they never takes us by surprise: but if any one else had laid hold of my tail in that way, I should have knocked his thundering teeth down his impudent throat."

As Spanker lowered his voice at the end of this sentence in order that he might not wound the feelings of M. de Passoa, the threat was lost upon the pillow, where scarcely had its conclusion been breathed, before the utterer was once more giving sounds of repose.

Shrugging his shoulders, making sundry grimaces, and uttering divers interjectional condemnations, the Frenchman once more retraced his way on deck, wondering in his own mind whether English seamen were made of the same materials as any other human beings; and fully believing that he had for the last time beheld those rude companions of his late trials, who, whether they combated against him or fought by his side, struggled with him in defiance of the tempest or shared the mutual danger, had in every point of view exhibited traits of manliness and worth that had very effectually endeared them to a mind of a high and honourable nature. In his last conclusion, at any rate, M. de Passoa was wrong; as he gained the quarter-deck his eager and apprehensive glance was intensely fixed upon the threatening pile of rock, that seemed momentarily advancing to swallow them up, and was only disturbed from this by the sound of the French commanding officer's voice on the weather side of the quarter-deck; but it was not the sound alone, but the substance also which attracted him, for he distinctly heard the question asked, "Is the rascally captain on board?"

The word captain pronounced at sea possesses a magic unknown to landsmen. To all who bear that autocratic rank, the name is a personal matter that concerns each individually; to all of an inferior grado it has still great individual interest, since each is anxious to know what new command is to be assumed over them. Turning quickly round therefore, De Passoa beheld the committee of inquiry issuing from the cabin of the nightcap. Alas! that unhappy nightcap, what mischief had it not occasioned! Monsieur de Passoa listened anxiously for the reply,

when he heard the head of the committee make answer in a way which it certainly was well for the utterer, that Mrs. Archdeacon did not hear also.

"I believe, sir, you are right in your suspicions, that the captain of the English merchantman is on board under pretence of being the mate. An old woman in a nightcap has told Monsieur Joudin that his name is Simpson, and described the person of the tall stout seaman."

"Bring him forward," said the French commander, with a curt determination of tone that did not seem much to reassure the self-reproaches of his more feeling lieutenant.

"The poor fellow, sir, is gone below, worn out with fatigue," replied the other in a deprecating manner.

"On deck with both of them this instant, sir," and the Frenchman stamped upon the deck in a manner that silenced all further intercession.

M. de Passoa, who had lost no word of this dialogue, which was of course carried on in his own language, now quietly crept up to the spot where the French commandant was standing, in order to watch the proceedings, and if possible to prove serviceable to his friends. The necessary orders having been transmitted below, half-a-dozen soldiers were sent down to bring the unfortunate Englishmen before the ferocious savage into whose power they had fallen. More imperative than either death or danger, the captain's commands were not to be withstood. This time it was utterly in vain that our worn-out friends put on the record a plea of being only passengers. They were forcibly dragged from their hammocks, and signs made to them by which they very intelligibly understood, that if they did not put on their clothes they would be carried into the keen blast in a state of nudity.

"Shiver my timbers," cried the enraged Spanker as he thrust his legs through his tar breeches, and donned his wet jacket, whipped his wet handkerchief round his neck, and thrust his naked feet into his sodden shoes, with a thought-like celerity that astonished the French soldiers; he called aloud to Captain Simpson, "I suppose, your honour, this is what your blackguard French thieves call hospitality. Well, never mind I says, but if so be this-here ship does go ashore, as little Mounseer was talking about, why then if I don't pitch into some of these chaps for disturbing a fellow's watch below in this way, I hope I may miss stays and fall to leeward of Fiddler's Green altogether."

By this time they had arrived on the main-deck of the seventy-four; as they were about to ascend the ladder to the quarter-deck, some one rapidly passed them; it was De Passoa, who whispered in his comrade's ear, "Mrs. Ass-skin," thereby meaning Mrs. Archdeacon, "was tell that you are the real Capitaine Simpson, you shall maintain you are not, and Mrs. Ass-skin one mad woman. You twicke?" meaning thereby you twig.

Simpson nodded his head in return, as much as to say that he did twig; and with this satisfactory intelligence, on glided the active little champion of chivalry; while the interchange of signs with their prisoner had been so rapid that the soldiers, though they heard some words in a language which they did not understand, had been unable in the faint

light of growing morning to detect the person of the speaker. Thinking it therefore a matter of no import, theydid not attempt to intercept him, but pursued their route to the quarter-deck, on which they had scarcely arrived, when M. de Passoa was seen to glide softly up after them, wearing at his side his favourite long rapier, the only article of property which he had attempted to save with his life, and which it seems he had gone below to regain. Whether because he thought the ship was on the point of going ashore, and wished to make one last effort to rescue his ancestor's venerated weapon with himself, or whether he wished it to perish but with himself, or whether for some more active necessity for it, remains to be seen.

As soon as the prisoners had arrived on the quarter-deck, they naturally looked round as most seamen would to ascertain the position of the ship with regard to the shore.

"A very nice offing this, your honour, in a gale of wind," said Spanker, addressing his superior.

"Ay," replied the other, grimly smiling, "I don't think it would take much to toss a biscuit among those breakers."

"No, your honour, when I was a boy I could flip a marble nearly far enough for that."

"More's the pity, Spanker; 'tis an awful night for some ten or twelve hundred human beings to be cast away. I doubt, Spanker, if we were altogether right in hooking on at the stern of the seventy-four whether she would or no."

"Oh never mind, your honour, they're only Frenchmen, and if anything does happen to them, why as long as we're on board they're drowned in wery good company, to say nothing of the young ladies."

"Why, to be sure, Spanker, that's a great consolation, and so I feel it, only somehow or other I have my doubts when our logs are overhauled for the last time aloft, whether we marchant captains have the same latitude allowed us for killing Frenchmen that will no doubt be found in the commission of you men-o'-war's-men."

"Why, your honour, I don't think you need be uneasy about that; no doubt there's a good British feeling aloft where we are agoing; and if so be as that's the case, the clerk of the checque won't be over nice to report us for an extra hundred or two of these varmin, because you see all these parleyvous are what they calls infidels, and most of them, by what I can hear, are in the black list already."

"Why yes, Spanker, I believe it is pretty much as you say, only unfortunately there seems to be some doubt as to what is the exact meaning of the term infidels; some folks assert one thing, some another; the parsons I believe say it's a matter of dead reckoning; but there was a very clever chap, a mate in my last ship, who always would have it that the term infidel was only a more genteel kind of word for men that eat one another."

"Why no, your honour, I fancy you must be thinking of carnivals."

"You're right, Spanker, my boy, carnivals is the name I was thinking of; yes, carnivals is the men what eats one another, only carnivals doesn't sound quite like the word either, and if that's the case you see"—

"Holloa, shiver my timbers, what are these thieves about? No, it can't be, and yet it is—hang it, we'll have a fight for it first. Do you see, your honour, these cowardly lubbers have been reeving a yard-rope."

As Spanker made this last discovery, he darted his huge fist full in the face of the Frenchman standing next to him, who felled by the unexpected blow, came heavily to the deck; Simpson, following the energetic example, struck down another, but it was all too late. While our two friends had been wholly absorbed in the theological discussions we have recorded, the French seamen had, by the orders of their commander, been busily engaged in getting a whip from the yard-arm, and fitting on at the end of it four running nooses. Spanker's quick eye having caught sight of this deadly preparation, he conjoined the fact of its use and the present arrest of himself and his captain with the previous interrogation which they had both undergone, and jumping to the right conclusion, made an effort at least to die fighting. But however gratifying to the feelings of our friends thus to defy their enemies to the last, the effort was in vain. The soldiers who had brought them up from below stood prepared around: overpowered by numbers, the Englishmen's active arms were seized, and while one party pinioned their hands behind their backs, others bound their feet with strong lashings that forbade all hope of escape. Thus then the only member left at liberty was the tongue, and of this each made the most ample use. Every term of invective, denunciation, raillery, and abuse, that the English language is susceptible of affording was by turns brought into play; but of this the surrounding Gauls took no notice, for several sufficient reasons: the first was that they did not chance to understand one word of the tirade which was poured forth against them.

"Is the yard rope up all ready?"

"All ready, sir," replied the seamen.

"Knot the nooses, and fix them on the prisoners' necks."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied one of the junior officers whose duty it was to see this disagreeable office executed; and in spite of all the threats and contortions of both parties, as well as the fettered movements of Spanker, a halter was placed round the neck of each, and at the command of the French captain the yard rope was hauled sufficiently taut to give our friends a very lively notion of the hempen cravats they wore.

"How many have you got there?" demanded the French tyrant, as his bloodshot eyes seemed starting out of his head from the fury of his own passions.

"There are only the English captain and one of his crew," replied one of his officers.

"Let the ship be searched instantly for the other two, and let them be brought on deck."

An assent was given to this order; and while the sergeant and one or two soldiers went below to execute it, a temporary reprieve was granted to Simpson and the still fuming Spanker.

In a few minutes the soldiers returned, bearing in their powerful gripe the shivering and emaciated body of the first scholar in Europe, who

certainly bore much the same sort of appearance that a sparrow might be supposed to do in the talons of some remorseless eagle, if eagles could ever be found prostituting their mighty natures to so miserable a prey.

"Who have you got there?" demanded the French commander, seeing his myrmidons appear, without being able very clearly to distinguish who it was they bore in their gripe.

"The English clergyman," answered some one.

"Where is the other scoundrel?"

"We can't find him, sir," replied the corporal.

"Try again," was the only answer.

Once more the soldiers descended; after a lapse of a few minutes, while the Frenchman continued pacing up and down the weather side of the quarter-deck in vindictive silence, he suddenly stopped short, turned fiercely round to his second in command, and after a volley of French oaths demanded,—"What is the meaning of this delay? Go down, sir, yourself, and see that this pretended prisoner is brought this instant upon deck."

"Who do you mean, sir," quietly asked the lieutenant, "do you allude to the French officer who called himself M. de Passoa?"

"Who can I allude to, sir, but the false knave who assisted these men to palm off a deceit upon ourselves, whether his name be De Passoa, or anything else?"

"Base and tyrannical coward," cried De Passoa, starting forward from his nook,—"if it is me to whom you allude, I retort back upon yourself the unworthy terms you have used with the shame and the falsehood that dictated them; you have taken a base and murderous advantage of the power that protects you in our country's ship, to exercise a murderous oppression over men infinitely worthier than yourself: but if ever we live to regain the shore alive, I will hold you responsible to me in the last drop of your blood for your conduct to-night."

"Away with the raving madman," contemptuously answered the French commander, "away with the lying emigrant to the halter he deserves," pointing at the same time to the soldiers, who had already secured the three previous victims, and who now, rushing on the fourth before he could defeat their efforts, bound, pinioned, and haltered him, like the rest. "Form a line along the deck," continued the sanguinary monster, "and the moment the ship grounds, run them all to the yard-arm. Those who waste the lives of Frenchmen, shall never die the same honourable death as the victims whose existence they have betrayed."

"May I be allowed to say one word, sir," interposed the first lieutenant, who now most keenly felt how much of this frightful scene was owing to his own indiscretion.

"Not one syllable, sir, unless you wish to form the fifth," fiercely interposed his brutal superior.

The lieutenant now saw that the case was hopeless, as far as his interference could avail, and falling back in silent horror, issued those orders which he had been commanded to repeat, while the crew, taking

in their hands the fatal rope on which four lives depended, formed themselves along in line, ready at the first given signal, to commit that official murder on which their superior seemed resolved. Well knowing their prejudices, and fearful that men on the brink of death themselves might hesitate at committing the dreadful crime in which they were about to become the tools of a lawless despot, the captain had cunningly contrived to raise the cry of his being an emigrant, a term at that period sufficiently odious in the estimation of the lower orders of the French people to justify any outrage, however atrocious. Had it not been for this, there was a hope, however faint, that the seamen would themselves have prevented the cruelty of their superior, by mutely declining to carry it into execution. They themselves had most bitterly experienced the galling yoke of their present tyrant, and having frequently before this night shown symptoms of mutiny and disaffection, the first lieutenant was not without some hope that this tendency, generally so productive of evil on board a ship, would, in this instance, achieve a most desirable benefit. The word emigrant had, however, steeled their hearts, the men silently formed on each side of the yard-rope, while the seventy-four plunged every moment nearer and nearer to those fatal rocks, her first dash on which was to be the signal of our friends' disgraceful death. At this awful period, the only human sound perceptible on board, was the stern unyielding pace of the sanguinary wretch who had that night given such evidence of his power, and the end to which he seemed inclined to use it. Every other eye was fixed in intense excitement upon the circle of foaming waters to where, a few hundred yards away upon their lee-bow, a gigantic cliff reared its vast perpendicular bluff, in almost a straight line, five or six hundred feet above the tormented sea, that boiled and thundered at its base. Projecting, as this point evidently did, beyond the rest of the coast, it was here in all probability that the seventy-four would first encounter the land, and take up that bed from which no living being of her crew could ever expect to rise; escape was impossible—not the slightest atom of beach was discernible—the water for at least half a mile flowed directly up to the wall of the cliff, and was in all probability many feet deep; while the resistless force with which the whole swell of the Atlantic beat on this gigantic barrier, was sufficient to have beat into countless pieces the bulk and strength of a leviathan.

Towards this point, then, the ship gradually tended; at last it approached fearfully near. The Bluff already bore a few short yards direct upon the lee-beam, the outer line of the breakers seemed almost directly under her main channel, and the gigantic waves culminated, ere they fell with frightful vehemence. Suddenly a tremendous shock was felt through every timber of the ship's frame, causing each man upon her decks to stumble forwards, and cling to the nearest object for support, while after the first severe concussion a heavy grating noise was heard and felt, as if one of the ship's anchors had been suddenly let go, and the cable were running swiftly out from on board. At this instant a frightful cry arose from the ship's decks fore and aft, and

in every possible intonation of distress were heard the words, "She's struck!" while a heavy sea washing in board of her to leeward flooded the decks with water, and seemed to give but too good a foundation for the subsequent shout of horror which it elicited of "We're sinking, we're sinking!" In the first pause which this tumult permitted, the relentless French commander was heard shouting, "Sway away the yard rope." Already the voice of some of the inferior officers was heard repeating the brutal mandate; already the fatal line began to tauten, and the suffocating feeling round our friends' necks warned them to take a last adieu of life, when forward dashed the first lieutenant, and addressing himself to the crew:—"Stop, stop, my men," he cried, "she's off again and floating, all may yet be well." News like this arrested every movement, like the spell of an enchanter's wand. The seamen looked to leeward, and, to their indescribable joy, beheld already receding upon the quarter the gigantic headland which had been the cause of so much fear; while the land on the weathermost side of it trended away from them at a right angle, and thus left ample sea-room for their ship to stand off from the coast in safety, should her recent striking on a rock have produced no material injury to her frame. The effect produced on the seamen by this change in their prospects can easily be imagined; they could not find it in their hearts ruthlessly to take the lives of four unhappy men who claimed their protection, at the very moment when their own had been miraculously spared. But the nature of their superior was formed of neither such reasonable nor humane materials. Perhaps not rightly seeing that his ship had escaped the threatened danger, or believing that the blow she had received would yet prove fatal, these feelings may have influenced him in the brutal course which he pursued,—that, namely, of shouting, "To the yard-arm with the traitors." Somewhat puzzled which to obey, the dictates of their own natures, or those of the relentless being under whom they served, the men hesitated; but another second their doubts vanished, the door of the poop cabin was seen to open, and forth rushed a nightcap!

It was indeed no ordinary compilation of frills and muslin, but a cap both of service and pretension, since it bore all the appearance of having been wet and dry at least a dozen times since last it came from any laundress' hands. This nightcap, too, was well supported by as round and firm a figure of flesh and blood as need ever be seen *en robe de nuit* upon the quarter-deck of a man-of-war.

We feel that it would be unnecessary further to name the timid fair, even if her own language did not sufficiently mark out her estate.

"What! hang my husband!" cried this unwonted apparition. "Hang my husband! hang the archdeacon! No, I never will permit such a thing on board any ship where I am. Where is the monster—where is the wretch that dared to think of such a murder?" brandishing aloft her arms, and scrambling along the deck with considerable difficulty, from the rolling of the vessel.

As no one, however, understood the language in which they were couched, we do not conceive it to reflect upon the politeness of her

auditors that she received no distinct answer to her inquiries. To this taciturnity she had however of late been much accustomed; but knowing exactly where to look for the captain, from long experience of the spot tabooed to that human deity, she glanced across to the weather side of the quarter-deck, and there beheld the object of her search standing on a gun,—his attitude,—the speaking-trumpet which he bore in his hand,—his loud voice and imperious gestures to the crew, all placed his identity beyond a doubt. She saw the urgency of the case, and darting towards him like an incensed she-mammoth, in a few seconds had drawn the ruddy imprint of her ten imperatives, otherwise called nails, down the whole length of his stern physiognomy.

"Who is this mad woman?" cried the captain, starting back with pain and rage.

"He is my husband, sir," retorted the lady of the nightcap, without understanding or caring to understand one word of what the other said. "He is my husband, sir, and therefore sacred to all. He is *the* archdeacon, sir, the *Reverend* Archdeacon, sir! How dare you threaten one single hair of his head?" The very thought seemed to spur her on to fresh demonstrations, and darting onward to a second attack, with equal success she struck her opponent a most severe blow on the eye. A look of demoniac rage scowled on the face of the Frenchman. In an instant his naked sword was gleaming in the air, and the career of Mrs. Archdeacon Pontifex seemed to be near its termination; when another rapier beat up the threatening blade, parried the thrust, and in the next second had passed through the heart of the unmanly ruffian. Mrs. Archdeacon saw she had a most favourable opportunity for a faint, and was not slow to avail herself of it; while the arm that received was the arm that had rescued her—that of her old and gallant friend M. de Passoa. The seamen, who could not help laughing heartily on first seeing their superior thus attacked by a woman, had released the prisoners from their bonds, and De Passoa's first use of his liberty was the deed of justice and humanity we have recorded. The command now passing by the death of the commander into the hands of his first lieutenant, the prisoners were allowed to go below rejoicing in secret at the punishment of their late tyrant, and the probability that existed of the ship's weathering both the land and storm. As she made little or no water, this was at last effected; and in a few weeks, whose dull monotony requires no record, the seventy-four arrived, late one afternoon, in one of the harbours of St. Domingo; on the same evening all the gentlemen were sent ashore, the ladies having to remain till the morrow. Evelyn being among the former, disembarked at once; and though all were strictly watched, nothing could be more exquisite than the house to which they were carried a few miles from the shore. With all a woman's curiosity to examine a new region, Evelyn rose before the sun had risen, and watched that glorious and gorgeous spectacle from her window. As she sat wrapped in thought and admiration, the remembrance of the same hour in her once happy home came over her in all its power. The tears gradually rose, swelled, and at last poured down

her lovely cheek in unrestrained abandonment; and taking up a pencil that lay near her, she traced on the painted window-sill a line—another and another followed it; till, the mind, soothed by this delightful charm, left there the following record of its sorrows:—

## LINES

### ON MY TWENTY-FIRST BIRTH-DAY, 25TH MAY.

Once more, sweet May, thy beams renew
The promise of the year,
And evanescent as the dew
Our dawning hopes uprear.

Yet 'tis not by the flight of spring
The length of life appears;
Time measures life with winter's wing,
And gages it in tears.

And like to Ganges' lamp-lit bark,
That ne'er to land may turn,
So every year more dim and dark
The lights of memory burn.

And floating down the ocean stream
Of life, make out to sea,
And leave us on the shore to dream
Dreams of eternity.

'Tis sun-rise!—O'er the living earth,
The Lord proclaims his power;
A language in each hue hath birth,
A tongue in every flower.

Though mute the air and still as death,
I hear their anthems rise;
Sweet is the incense of their breath,
And bless'd their harmonies.

Theirs is the worship of the heart,
The temple of the soul,
No narrow sects their creeds dispart,
Nor bigots may control.

Theirs is the voice of happy days,
The sound of early years,
Whose simple music oft betrays
The inmost soul to tears.

The cawing of the wakeful rook,
The rushing of the morning wind,
The wailing of the unseen brook,
The watch-dog baying to the hind:

These in the ever-varied note
Of Nature's sweet and ceaseless song,
Still to the pensive ear remote
The magic of our life prolong.

Fair Joy bedeck'd in violets,
The emblem of our youth
With many a troop of fond regrets
Which fear no test but truth;

The days to passion and to love
By young devotion given,
And vows that rose to keep above
Their sacred watch in heaven:

All seem reviving still to bloom,
And mock the weary head,
Like flowers that deck the marble tomb,
Where all we loved lies dead!

Those eyes that once were all in all,
To us seem beaming still;
And dear familiar footsteps fall,
Like roebucks on the hill.

Nor need our lips to breathe the name
That first our heart obey'd;
When wounded saplings still proclaim
Its music through the glade.

Where are the faithful friends we tried
On life's tempestuous waves?
Our fondest wishes scarce can guide
Our footsteps to their graves!

Where are the joyous shouts that fill'd
Of old my father's hall?
Now many a verdurous damp distill'd
Writes ruin on the wall!

By * * 's wooded flood it stands,
Where sweetly breathes the rose,
But far away in many lands
My brethren's bones repose!

* * * * * *

Why do these thoughts unbidden rise?
This day to peace was given;
Vainest of votives 'neath the skies,
Peace only lives in heaven!

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

IN WHICH THE CURRENT OF OUR STORY RETURNS TO CERTAIN OF OUR CHARACTERS IN ENGLAND, AND SHOWS HOW COLONEL SPRIGHTLY OBLIGED DICK DOUBTFUL BY THE LOAN OF A HORSE.

HAVING now safely brought our heroine to that island which is to prove the theatre of some of our future operations, it is only fair to some of our other characters that we should, for a brief period, so far interest ourselves in their fortunes, as for a while to turn back and see whither, and in what manner, their destinies led them.

It was a fine spring day in London, and Easter term was rapidly drawing to a close, when, on the sunny side of Parliament-street, the illustrious figure of Dick Doubtful was busily wending its way towards the statua *gentilissima* of Charles the First. Dick's head was hung on one side—there was an expression of puzzled perplexity round his mouth, which his right hand was kindly supplying with the tip of a black-lead pencil, cut to the last verge of economy. The hour was drawing nigh unto five o'clock, at which celestial period the various Inns of Court, to wit, Lincoln's Inn, Inner Temple, Gray's Inn, and Middle Temple, are accustomed to teach young gentlemen of moderate fortunes and large ambition, how the road to the woolsack may be cut out by the teeth; but in a crisis like this, we scorn all metaphor, and we therefore summarily assert that Dick Doubtful was making the best of his way to be in time at one of the aforesaid Inns for dinner. The perplexity of our friend's countenance arose from that happy habit of perspicacious minds—the thinking of six things at once; he was busily engaged in reflecting upon certain predilections of his for a certain young lady, which he feared, unless he looked to the thing very narrowly, might ripen into uncontrollable love. Dick had once, a long time ago, sworn to die a bachelor; it is at all times an imprudent oath, and we shall see how the fates punished him for daring to aspirate it.

At the same time, Dick was also reflecting with much grief upon the condemnation of Paul Periwinkle; wondering whether he was really guilty of murdering his kinsman or not—guessing at the actors and agents in his escape—surmising how far it had been successful—whether the said Paul were alive or not, and, if alive, whether happy.

With all these various subjects of cogitation, each ramified into as many hundred different distinctions by that dexterity which distinguishes lawyers in general, and Dick Doubtful in particular, there was mixed up a very subtle question of legal nicety, arising *Ratione Tenuræ;* whether the inhabitants of the parish of Stick-in-the-bog, or any of them, were liable to repair the road leading into the said parish from the village of Break-my-neck; or whether the liability to repair such road did not rest upon one Emilius Snoggins, the proprietor of certain lands there situate, "*Ratione Tenuræ,*" as aforesaid.

This interesting case, which had been argued six hours in the Queen's

Bench that happy morning, and on which the Court had been pleased to defer passing judgment for some indefinite period, at present greatly interested the mind of Dick Doubtful, who most diligently reported generally in the Exchequer, but that day for a friend in the Queen's Bench, for that inestimable periodical entitled "The Legal Oracle," a paper which was found of the greatest use in the chambers of numberless young barristers, for—the laundresses to light their fires; and for this grand purpose, or rather we should say for a part of this grand purpose, Dick Doubtful sedulously and diligently devoted the morning of his life. Woe is me, Alhama! However, to resume our story.

While Dick was hurriedly walking along, deeply absorbed in discussing whether the question "*Ratione Tenuræ*" did arise or not, he heard a light and jovial voice sing out from the carriage road, "Ah, my dear Dick Doubtful, can that be you?" For some time Doubtful was unable to gather what question had been asked him, so busily was he engaged in his mental occupations; but at last he comprehended what was demanded sufficiently to answer, that he was quite sure it was a delicate question; it certainly might be him, though not aware who it was that seemed to have such active possession of his name.

"What, my boy! don't you remember me?" said his accoster, pulling up a very handsome and spirited charger to the side of the pavement, and frankly putting out his hand.

"Why, sir," taking the proffered palm, "it is a very nice matter to say positively that I do not know you; but, upon my word, you really have the advantage of me, that is under my present impression; I may have seen you before, or we may have dined together, or we may have sat in the same box at the theatre, or in the same pew at church, or"—

Then the other interrupted him. "—Why, you old rascal, you are the same dubious, perplexed, hesitating, mortal as ever. I didn't think I'd been quite so much altered, look on me again, Dick; don't you remember Fred Sprightly, your old chum of Trinity College, Dublin?"

"Oh! really, 'pon my word, I beg your pardon; so it is, I declare. Well, Mr. Sprightly, how are you?"

"D—— your Misters, Dick, none of your nonsense, I'll have you call me Sprightly, or I'll call you out."

"Oh! 'pon my word you're too kind. Well then, Sprightly, what have you been doing with yourself this age?"

"Why, my boy, I haven't time to tell you half of it now; but come, I am out for a ride now, and you must not detain me, I've only a short hour to canter along in, and there's nothing on earth that delights me more than talking to a friend. My groom, behind there, has a capital piece of horseflesh. I'll turn him off: you mount, and, while we trot through the parks, I'll tell you all that's happened since we parted."

"Oh! 'pon my word, my dear sir, this is a very nice question"—

"Nice, to be sure it is; it's the nicest bit of horseflesh you could meet with in a day's march.—Here, Donaldson," calling for the groom.

"But, my dear Mr. Sprightly, really I—I don't know, it's so long since I rode"—

"Never mind, d——e, my boy, it'll do you more good."

"But, Mr. Sprightly, I've no dress for riding; I've no straps to my trousers."

"Never mind, the horse won't know that, you remember."

"But really this is a very nice question tho'; I've got my note-book that I take my legal reports with in my pocket."

"Oh! so much the better, it will answer instead of spurs—here, here comes Donaldson." At this moment up rode the redoubted Donaldson. "Here, Donaldson, jump off, and give your horse to this gentleman."

Swift at the word, the ready lackey dismounted, and touching his hat with one hand, held the horse's bridle in the other. Nothing could possibly be more inviting to a man who loved to feel a splendid piece of horseflesh beneath him; but Dick still hesitated, "Was the horse perfectly quiet?"

"Oh, quiet as an eagle!"

"But an eagle, Mr. Sprightly, that's a very nice point that; does it shy?"

"Shy! devil of anything shy is there about it. I've known him been introduced to the finest women in Europe, and the deuce a blush you'd see on his face, if you put on a pair of spectacles on purpose. Come, don't stand debating so long, but mount, my boy."

Thus urgently requested, Dick Doubtful bestrided the horse provided for him; although, it must be acknowledged, with many a misgiving; and he and his friend, Sprightly, made the best of their way up Parliament-street.

Dick's report-book flapped ominously in his coat-pocket: now against the hinder part of his saddle, now against the hindermost parts of his steed; while the latter, not being what we may call quite "up" to reporting for the "Legal Oracle," started vehemently every time that his ribs and the note-book became acquainted.

Dick thought his horse was rather restive, but contented himself with a silent consultation as to what could be the matter. Dick was so much of a lawyer, he never could have believed any Christian's horse capable of taking offence at a report-book. Did we say a lawyer? that term falls far short of the description. His existence might have been termed the law life-assurance of hope deferred. In the world he saw nothing else but materials for law; the Halls of justice were, in his eye, but so many alembics from which to distil precedents:—money itself was only valuable as the fuel with which to work them. In the mind, he could perceive nothing more than a store-house in which to treasure up each learned *caput mortuum*. The true goal of human happiness was the ermine; and present contentment but another name for briefs. His music was a chief-justice's judgment, written of course and delivered in the deepest sense "*ore rotundo;*" while the finest idea he ever formed of painting, was more than surpassed by a profound report in the equity side of the Exchequer. Dancing conveyed to his senses but a dim remembrance of running up and down the steps

of the Temple Library; and the qualifications of a man versed in polite letters, were comprised in a memory that could sport, at any moment, wish the best half of the year books: while to his friends it was often a very serious question whether, in his theology, Bacon, Coke, Lyttleton, and Hale, were not inextricably confounded with the Evangelists.

To such an individual, therefore, it may easily be supposed how novel a matter was riding on horseback. Dick certainly had seen the thing very often done, and once or twice, on extreme occasions, he had mounted a horse, and discovered the astonishing fact that nothing but the most desperate clinging could secure his seat on the animal: however, there he was, and he determined, since fortune had played him such a freak, so to comport himself for the short space of time he had to ride, that none of the bystanders should detect his confusion. 'Twas true that now and then his hand glided towards the pummel of the saddle; and we believe he went as far as to grasp the bridle with both hands, and hold them as an ordinary rule nearly on a level with his mouth: he looked aside, too, very graciously at the dangers he had passed.

"Why, Doubtful, my boy, it appears to me almost as if you were not accustomed to jog about in this agreeable manner."

"Why, upon my word, no; I—I apprehend not; and as to its agreeableness, that appears to me to be a very delicate question. Don't you think he's rather hard in the mouth?"

"Hard in the mouth! bless your heart! he's as soft in the mouth as silk."

"Well, well, I don't mean to say he is not, I merely just raised the question; tho' very possibly it may be quite as you say. It's a very nice matter that, to know how hard a horse's mouth—but—but—bless me!" Here Colonel Sprightly broke into a nice gentle trot, which Dick no sooner felt, than he exclaimed, "Dear me! I don't know, but this motion certainly appears to me—Isn't this horse of yours considered a little rough in his paces?"

"Rough in his paces, my dear fellow? why, Dick, he's as delicate as velvet."

"Is he? very possibly so—I don't mean to say he's not, remember. I merely threw out the suggestion; or, perhaps, it was this confounded note-book which got between me and the saddle."

"Confound it! if a man chooses to ride upon three-cornered books, razors' edges, or bayonet points, it's no reason why he should find fault with his horse," said the Colonel somewhat sharply, who prided himself upon his flesh.

"Oh, certainly not—certainly not," said Dick, who replied in a most deprecatory manner: "only I think a little more gentle pace would perhaps in these crowded streets"—

"Oh, you want a walk. Very well, we can take a good rattling canter in the park, when we get out of these streets."

"I think a walk would be more desirable," replied Doubtful, without noticing the rest of the, to him, most dangerous proposition; and accordingly as they wound under the base of the venerable statue of

Charles the First, the Colonel reduced his paces to a walk, and his companion gladly followed the example.

"Well," said Dick, "what have you been doing since we parted at College?"

"All sorts of tricks, till by good luck and better interest, I've just come back from India, with three years' leave and a lieutenant-colonelcy. Will you come and dine with me to-morrow?"

"Why, what is the hour; you see it's a very difficult matter to get away for dinner, for the Exchequer doesn't rise till"—

"Oh! d—— the rising of the Exchequer; by the fuss you make about it, one would think it was the rising of a very fine trout. My dinner-hour is eight o'clock; no man has a right to rise after that, so I'll take no excuse—while I think of it, I'll give you my address; Neilgherry Lodge, Roehampton. By-the-bye, I've changed my name since we parted; however, I'll tell you about that after two bottles of Burgundy; you'll be able to support it better. But stay, look a-head, Dick, here comes a dog-cart."

"Oh, yes, Sprightly, but what of that? we have a great many of them in our metropolis; I think it's a very cruel practice, which the Legislature ought to put down*; for, however ingenious"— But while Dick, who could not conceive why a dog-cart should be a matter of especial observation, was in the very act of expatiating on the great ingenuity of making dogs do the work of donkeys, Dick's horse gave a sudden and vehement shy to the other side of the road, in a manner that very nearly consigned the rider to one of those little *tumuli* of mud which appeared in former days of the metropolis to be left expressly for this convenience.

As soon as Doubtful had in some degree recovered that utterance, of which momentary horror had deprived him, he addressed his accommodating friend with "Bless my soul! this appears a very dangerous horse of yours; does he often shy in that way?"

"Dangerous—poh, poh—shy? Nothing of the sort, except at the dog-carts—scissor-grinders—milestones—red cloaks, and things of that sort. I tell you the fault isn't in the horse, man, you haven't been riding lately. Why, how many horses do you keep?"

"Keep!" replied Dick, with a latent smile, "you'll be pleased to remember, that I am neither a Colonel on full pay, nor am I just returned from India; so that unless I, or my clerk, or my laundress, are entitled to be called horses, I think it a very doubtful matter whether I can be said to keep any."

"Why, not keep any horses, my boy? why how, in the name of fortune, do you pass your time?"

"Why you know I report"—

"O fiddlestick, report! I suppose you're not always reporting?"

"Why no, perhaps not exactly; but I have to rise by seven in order to dress by eight, so as to have my breakfast and be down in Court soon after nine; and you see the Exchequer doesn't rise till nearly five, and that barely gives me time to get to my Inn and dine; and at

* Since the date of our story, the Legislature has followed Dick's suggestion.

seven o'clock I have to be at my chambers, and write out the reports of the day, which takes me till eleven. After that, comes correcting the proofs of the next week's Oracle, which occupies till about one; and then, with reading up a few cases and any stray briefs that may come in, it's nearly two o'clock in the morning before I get fairly rid of my business: after which come my private correspondence, my accounts, and family business; for you see I'm trustee to one of my brother's children, as well as two of my sister's marriage settlements. And as the husband of one has just died in Persia, and the other is trying to get a divorce from a thief of a fellow—who has treated her very ill, by the way—besides two or three other matters of business, which my friends have forced me into, and doing a little portion of a law book—treatise on evidence, in twelve parts,—I think myself very fortunate if I get my head fairly on my pillow by three o'clock, very fortunate indeed, let me tell you."

"And do you call that life?" said the Colonel, looking at Dick's pale face, as he rode beside him.

"Life! life!" repeated Dick; "why don't you think it a very comfortable life?"

"No! I'd sooner blow my brains out any day."

"Oh, 'pon my word, I differ from you—entirely; for tho' you see, I grant the brains may very easily be blown out, yet, should circumstances afterwards alter, they are very difficult to be put in again; mind, I don't mean to assert that the thing cannot be done, only I never met with any case recorded in the Books."

"I tell you what, Dick, you and your books have lived too much together all your life; at college you never gave yourself a chance of a fresh breath of air, which most infallibly ruined your complexion; and now I perceive you're carrying on the same game in London; what the devil do you get by it? are you any richer? are you a bit happier, for what you call your infernal knowledge? Cut the matter short, I've plenty of horses in town, and I insist on your taking that one you're now upon, and riding it an hour or two every day; you may either keep it at your own livery-stables, or I'll send it to mine."

"Thank you, thank you, you're really very kind, but 'pon my word"—

"Poh, poh—nonsense! I tell you, you shall do it, man, I won't take a refusal; you're getting as lank, and as pale, and as miserable, as a fed dog."

"Well, well, really, if I shan't be encroaching upon you."

"Poh, poh—devil encroaching! not a bit of it, man; I always say what I mean, you know; and now tell me what have become of all our brother-collegians and chums, that used to be part of our set at Trinity?"

In accordance with this request Doubtful entered into a long history of their former friends; in which, as usual, it appeared that Jack Smith had been shot, Charley Brown had been drowned, James Thompson died of the plague; India, Novogorod, Kamschatka, Crim-Tartary, with other near and accessible places of abode, had all contributed to

swallow up and obliterate both class-fellows and brother-students. And after riding very gently for half-an-hour in the park, Colonel Sprightly told his friend he was obliged to wish him good-bye, as he had a very particular matter in hand, and must depart to keep an engagement; but that Dick was to be sure and not fail, and be down at Neilgherry Lodge at the precise hour of dinner; for he, the Colonel, was very particular.

"Oh!" said Dick, "I won't fail, Sprightly, I'll be down there quite by seven: to-morrow is the last day of term, I've no doubt I shall be able to get away early, and I'll mount this horse of yours, which I dare say will carry me well."

"Oh! carry you—carry you—carry you like the wind, my boy."

"Thank you; I don't intend to go quite so fast as that, not quite; but, however, you may be sure I'll be down there in very good time."

"Well, do now; so do, my boy; now mind you keep your appointment, and I'll give you some curried shellfish in first-rate Indian style; if you keep my curry waiting, 'pon my word I won't forgive you."

"Don't be alarmed, I assure you I won't try your patience, for once I will be punctual."

"Well, do; and as a reward, I'll allow you to write a report of the dinner for the Oracle; and remember, you don't transgress by way of taking luncheon half-an-hour before you come down; for, remember, I am going to give you a first-rate tête-à-tête dinner, at which we can talk over old times; and after taking that trouble, whether you have any appetite or no, by the Lord Harry you must and shall eat it."

"Very well, very well, I'll do my best at any rate;" and Dick in a brown study as to the oddity of meeting his old friend, and having a horse forced upon him, whether he would or no, slowly paced homewards towards his chambers. Here, as he drew near Lincoln's Inn, he began to consider the impracticability of walking his horse up stairs; together with the inconvenience of foddering the animal in his bedroom: and his eye happening at this moment to alight on a placard over an archway, he there read, in green and gold, that John somebody took in livery horses to bait; "'Pon my word, this is the very thing," said Dick; "how exceedingly convenient! what street is this? let me see, there's Portugal-street; oh, come, 'tis close at home; well, I may as well use these livery-stables for my horse, since I *am* to ride whether I like it or not." Accordingly, Dick dismounted, led his horse in, and ordered it to be put up for the night, which was done. The ostler, who had been imbibing somewhat freely during the day, and afterwards dissipating the effects of his potations by a slight nap, came out to Dick's call, rubbing his eyes, received Dick's instructions, as to giving it plenty of food, put the horse in the stable, and saw Dick limp away as stiff and as miserable as if he had been tossed in a blanket. "'Pon my word," muttered Dick to himself as he walked along, "this is rather severe, I should almost have doubted if this could be called pleasure—but I suppose it's very good for the health; and as most people seem to like it very much, or say they do, there must be some

amusement discoverable in it at last, when one gets a little more accustomed." With other similar arguments Dick went off to his chambers, and after a lonely dinner, ventured to take what he thought would be a quiet nap for an hour, to enable him to recommence his labours. When the nap terminated, however, he found himself utterly in the dark, and a few minutes afterwards had the satisfaction of hearing St. Dunstan's church peel forth two o'clock in the morning. "The devil take this riding," murmured Dick—"think of my having lost a whole evening;" and with many a groan he once more roused his weary limbs, and hobbled off to bed.

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## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

CONTAINS DICK DOUBTFUL'S RIDE TO DINNER ON THE LAST DAY OF TERM.

"Seven o'clock, sir—shall I bring you a cup of coffee?" solicitously murmured Doubtful's clerk.

"I tell you I'm not used to riding," said Dick in reply, who was still in the land of dreams.

"Riding, sir," said the clerk, "it's the last day of term; there's the printer's devil waiting for copy for the Oracle."

"Bless my soul, so it is;" and in a few minutes Doubtful crept out of bed, and with many groans at Sprightly's kindness in forcing him on horseback, waddled about the room, finished his toilet, supplied the craving of the printer's devil, finally got down to Westminster, and thought himself lucky beyond all hope, when he once more found himself growing, or rather vegetating, on one of the adamantine benches of the Exchequer. After the same sweet routine that he had there witnessed for years, Dick, as a great sacrifice, flung overboard the last case, hurried back to his chambers, dressed for dinner, and then proceeded to the livery-stables to procure his horse, with much about the same sort of feeling that people in general visit a dentist. True it is that getting rid of the toothache is very delightful, but no less certain is the fact of the disagreeable mode by which this happiness is attained.

When Doubtful walked into the livery-stables, it certainly did for a moment strike him that it was not the same ostler; he wasn't very certain of the matter, and more busily intent with an excise case which he had that day been reporting, he considered the ostler's identity a very secondary question, and in a somewhat absent mood entered the stable, and pointed out his horse to the attendant.

"Nice little mare this of yourn, sir," said the ostler.

"Very odd," thought Dick, "that this ostler should call my horse a mare; but I suppose he is like one of your Devonshire people, with whom every thing is 'he' but a Tom cat: but still this man ought to know that every mare is a horse, though every horse is not a mare." Accordingly our abstruse friend was about to indulge the ostler with this very original and highly-refined aphorism, but with a passing

notion that it would be somewhat beneath his high dignity, unluckily for Dick's peace of mind he here restrained himself from the aforesaid jocularity; since, in all probability, had he thus descended to enlighten the ostler, the ostler might in return have enlightened him on a very important particular—however, the opportunity having been lost, turn we to our tale.

However strange Dick thought the ostler's conduct, the ostler had still stronger doubts respecting that of Dick, who for some time persisted in his right to mount his quadruped, whether horse or mare, by the right stirrup; a matter which the ostler had some difficulty in persuading him was not orthodox.

"I always do it," said Dick, whose mind was still in the Court of Exchequer.

"You do, sir?" said the ostler, perfectly aghast.

"Always," said Dick.

"But don't you find it very difficult, sir?" But to this, too, Doubtful said nothing, for he always found it difficult whichever side he attempted Unfortunately, however, he was not content with the *right* stirrup, but he must put his *left* foot into it; and it was only when he observed the tendency which this action had to place him with his face to the tail, that he began to have some distant notion of his conduct was, so being—to use the phrase of the bar—somewhat irregular.

"'Pon my word—'pon my word—I believe you're right after all."

"Ees, sir," grinned the ostler, who began to have very great doubts whether he was right in letting the horse go to such a rider; as soon, therefore, as Dick, with his assistance, had gained the animal's back, he boldly and manfully put the question, "Please, sir, who shall I say has taken his horse?" This question effectually brought Dick to the possession of all his faculties. Here was a case for hesitation; two courses might be taken. Dick was wholly unable to let slip such an opportunity for pondering. "It is a difficult question," murmured Dick to himself. "It is a very nice question; who shall I say has taken his horse? I can't answer truly if I say that Mr. Doubtful has taken his horse, because the horse is not mine; neither, on the other hand, can I say that Colonel Sprightly has taken his horse, for I am not Colonel Sprightly; and if I were to explain to the fellow this transaction, why, if he didn't see me bring Sprightly's horse in, he might have some objection to my taking Sprightly's horse out: on the other hand, it is a very delicate matter to say the least of it—a very delicate matter for me to assert an ownership in a property which does not belong to me." In either case Dick saw a thousand dangers, and, like many other wise men, by hesitating to take either, eventually adopted that which was most dangerous of any.

"Who shall I say has taken his horse?" repeated the ostler, interrupting Dick in his reverie, in not the most respectful manner, his suspicions that all was not right momentarily becoming stronger.

"Do you really wish to know?" inquired Doubtful, with what he intended to be a most resistless smile.

"Yes I do, sir," returned the ostler, in a most determined manner, laying his hand on the bridle.

"Why," replied Doubtful, "I've no objection to pay you the money for the night's keep of the horse."

"That's o' no consequence, sir; I've orders to let no horse go out of these stables unless the gentleman as owns him gives his name."

"Oh, very well, if that's the case, you may say Colonel Sprightly."

"What's the address, sir?"

"Neilgherry Lodge, near Roehampton."

"Very good, sir; will you be back late to-night?"

"Why, perhaps I may, or perhaps I may not be back at all to-night, so I'd better discharge my reckoning at once—what have I to pay you?"

"Only seven shillings, sir," said the modest ostler.

"Oh, very good—very moderate, indeed." Doubtful, as he said these words, observed a smile on the man's face; and well he might, for the ostler at first thought Dick was cognizant of the trick he had played upon him, and was quizzing him for his dishonesty. In the next moment, however, he perceived how the case really stood; and having further taxed Doubtful's purse by a demand of half-a-crown, which he levied with the assertion that it was the ostler's usual fee, he allowed the unhappy fleeced one to depart.

As soon as Dick's unhorseman-like figure had cleared the gateway, the worthy ostler rattled the lawyer's money in his pocket, and crossing one leg over the other, and leaning against the wall, began to make some shrewd reflections upon Dick's conduct and character. "That's a very rum chap for a colonel," murmured the ostler; "I always thought colonels was 'cute chaps, but a fool with his eyes shut might take in he." And yet this impious wretch was at this moment speaking of one of the sharpest counsel and best lawyers supporting that monument of research and learning the Legal Oracle! Alas! how little do the profane vulgar know, ye shades of Holt, and Hale, and Mansfield, of what really constitutes acuteness of the mind! To think of a vile, vulgar ostler—but our grief is idle, and our story waits. Dick had scarcely turned the angle of the street leading into Portugal-street, than his horse made a sudden demonstration of velocity, that, while it greatly endangered the necks of an old woman and her child, caused at the same time the learned rider quickly to gather in his reins, and address his whole soul to the task of holding on. Combermere—for that was the euphonious name that Sprightly had given to his horse—notwithstanding Dick's intimation, seemed quite as much inclined to go a-head as before. "Bless me," said Dick, "how very spirited this Combermere is, he is even more lively than he was yesterday; they certainly can't have been giving him too much corn—'pon my word though I think they have—they really have—he seems as if he'd perfectly fly. How very unfair it is to say that livery-stable keepers always plunder their customers by cheating the horses of their food! I'm sure they have given this animal too much corn—must be so. However, if I don't put a bold face on it, he'll be giving me a good deal of trouble. I'd better, therefore, take the fire out of him at once, and as he seemed so gentle yesterday, I'll just let him take a gallop across Lincoln's-Inn-Fields; and then when he sees I'm not afraid of him, I dare say he'll go quietly through the streets. After all, if it wern't for the confounded stiffness,

I should have had a very pleasant ride yesterday, for 'tis a quiet creature after all."

As our friend came to this conclusion he entered the square, which Lincoln's-Inn has named, and giving Combermere his head, away the animal darted at full speed; but still the motion was a relief from the hardness of his previous trot, and Dick had no objection to make on that score. The creature had been so gentle and so easily managed on the preceding day, he entertained no sort of apprehension as to stopping him; and who that ever enjoyed a gallop on horseback did not feel loath to terminate it? To be sure Dick was in the heart of the metropolis, and it did slightly occur even to him that his present pace was not wholly suited to the locality. He tried very gently, therefore, to pull the very gentle creature up; but the gentle creature, the moment it felt the tightening of the bridle, seemed to go still the more. In a few seconds the whole space of the square had been swiftly rattled over, and Dick found himself rapidly approaching the north-east corner, where, if he intended either to halt or to turn, it was absolutely necessary that the operation should be at once carried into effect. With a very vigorous effort on his part he certainly did endeavour to carry out first one and then the other of these much-desired conclusions to his gallop. Nothing of the sort, however, occupied the mind of Combermere; his action was beautiful, his pace superb, his tail flew out magnificently, and neither turn nor stop would he. On he flew across the square, away he darted like lightning past the turning, and with untiring hoof sprang up the blind alley, so well known to all lovers of the classical antiquities of London as the Little Turnstile, Holborn. The only passage here was, as our readers are probably aware, one for foot passengers alone; and for fear that even these should have too much room, the houses wind and project till they almost squeeze one another, and an iron post is fixed in the middle of each entrance to aggravate the difficulties of the strait.

Dick knew the locality well, and, with the utmost horror, recollected the utter impossibility of getting through this turnstile on one side, or of stopping his steed before he arrived at it on the other: however, he made the effort, and very gallantly, with both hands applied to his bridle, exerted his utmost strength to pull back the gentle creature in one direction, while his feet projected in the other.

The boys, who thickly people this confined region, were not slow in perceiving his extremity, and gathering round the victim a joyous group of sacrificers and rending the air with their various cries, they urged on the already frightened animal to still further speed. At the point where the blind alley ends, and the Turnstile commences, the corner is gently rounded off, and a barber's shop stands conspicuous. Now, whether Combermere entertained any erroneous notion either that he wanted shaving, or that his hair ought to be cut, or whether, by any inspection of Dick's phiz, he imagined that either of these operations would improve the appearance of his rider, I know not; but towards this barber's shop he now directed his rapid course, on perceiving which, the agony of the rider amounted to a pitch to which

nothing can do justice. With an expression of face which showed all his agony and perplexity, he strained and pulled, and, remembering to have seen more experienced jockeys do the same, resolutely worked his bridle until he sawed the bit from side to side in the mouth of Combermere. It was lucky that Dick resorted to this alternative. Combermere had, in truth, and in fact, taken the liberty to place Dick's bit between his teeth, but when he found his rider would stand no more nonsense, and had indeed jerked the iron into its proper place, Combermere, with a sudden stop, that very nearly sent his rider over his head, made an effort to pull up a yard from the barber's door. The apparition of the barber, with a razor in his hand, hesitating whether he ought or ought not to attempt cutting the horse's throat rather than see his shop window diminished, may also have had some influence in checking the "gentle creature"; but what with Dick's pulling and the barber's shouting, the boys huzzaing and Doubful exclaiming every minute, "The devil! the devil!—if we're not dashed to pieces no matter," Combermere at last contrived, by great good fortune, to bring up when he had not done more than push his neck half through the panes of one of the barber's windows.

Barbers, we regret to say, in London, often abandon themselves to the very blameable habit, when their glass is broken, of putting in panes of paper; such was the case in the present instance, for exactly in that spot where this barber exclaimed to the world, "shave for a penny," Combermere dashed through his handsome head, and got a very narrow shave for nothing. The shout of exultation that here arose from the boys, the screams from the women, the jeers from the pie-man, the reproaches from the barber, and Dick's muttered exclamation, not loud, but deep, "Thank God for this escape," were all simultaneously given at the *dénouement* we have described.

"I hope you're not hurt," said Dick politely to the barber, as soon as he had recovered his breath.

"*You* take your horse's head out of my shop, and then I'll talk to you," replied the tonseur, as soon as he could speak for surprise.

"Oh, certainly, sir, certainly," said Dick, with much ceremony, as if there could be some doubt on the question, endeavouring to coax back his steed from that admiring gaze which he had fixed upon a grocer in a white apron, with his cheek half lathered within the barber's shop.

"I say, sir, do you intend to take your horse's head out of my shop-window, or not?" repeated the barber, who, being a bashful man, grew unreasonably wroth at the mob gathering round his doors.

"Why, really"—Dick pulled as he spoke—"it seems rather a difficult question;" for the horse, either from being winded, or some other motive, remained with his head as quietly fixed inside, as if, like a herald's emblazonment, it was all proper.

"Difficult matter! then I'll soon make it an easy one," said the man of razors. "I'll soon make it easy enough." And snatching up the lathering brush, which he had temporarily laid aside, he applied it to the soap-box, and finally gave Combermere so smart a brush over the nose with the produce, that the sagacious quadruped, fully satisfied


*Bill Sikes attacked by the dog.*

with his experience, jerked back his head, and instantly exposed it to the gaze of the admiring multitude.

"Eh, mon, do that again," cried a ragged Scotch urchin.

"What! what!" cried Dick, who thought it some piece of kind advice. "Do what again?" And he craned, and stooped, and looked forward, but was nevertheless wholly unable to detect the kindness of the barber, or the cause of those innumerable shouts of laughter raised around him.

Now, as this was certainly not the purpose for which Dick had taken such an early leave of the Exchequer, he gathered up his reins, and at last succeeded in turning round Combermere's head. "This piece of prudence effectually won for Dick the regard of the hot pie-man, who, stepping up to the side of the rider, condescendingly made himself of his counsel in this wise. "I tell you what it is, young man, that 'ere's a wery wicious horse, and I adwise you to stick to your shopboard, and have no more to do with it."

"Vicious!" repeated Dick, in astonishment; and he himself thought he had been rather rash to leave his "shopboard" for so unsteady a seat. "Vicious, my good fellow, this horse is the gentlest creature in the world, only they have given it too much corn at the stable."

"Corn," repeated the pie-man in the most contemptuous manner, putting his hand to his nose with a motion indicating a great want of respect, "what a precious spooney you must be to talk in that way, as if we didn't know that it's all gammon; why don't you go home and mind your business; a pretty chap you are for riding; you don't know a horse from a mare yet."

"It's a very astonishing thing," muttered Dick to himself as he made haste to extricate himself from his present company, "'tis an extraordinary thing how very offensive vulgar people always are;" and without entering into any further argument, Dick indignantly paced his horse down the blind alley, and turned towards Drury Lane.

"Will they never have done shouting?" thought Dick, as the mob hallooed and as the little boys ran beside him; "I could excuse the low *canaille*, but what can those respectable people see to stare at?" He looked at himself—examined his dress—nothing particularly amiss in that met his eye. "I suppose it is the friskiness of the horse," which would every now and then persist in making start the second. Poor Dick was wholly unconscious of the minute soap bubbles that still circled round his steed's mouth, with all the beauty that generally marks a man disturbed in the middle of his toilet: by degrees, however, the lather as it dried became less conspicuous to the passers-by, the public stare gradually diminished, the little boys finding they had taken exercise enough, dropped off one by one, and Dick was left alone in his glory. Still the same hallucination possessed his mind;—still he would persist in wondering how the livery-stable keepers could have exceeded the allowance to his horse. Why the world should be so unjust as to call them cheats, and what the devil Combermere meant. "If he goes on in this way, my arms will soon be as stiff as my legs: the whole temper of the beast seems changed, he ought to have bran mixed with his

oats for the future; though if ever I get him safe to Neilgherry Lodge, the devil, I think, will lodge in me when I take him away again. Never mind, if I can only get him safe through the streets, without being poked into a dray-cart, or having one of my knees knocked off against the broad wheel of a waggon, I'll turn into Hyde Park, and give him such a breathing on the grass, I'll answer for it he shall go quietly down the road after that." With this prudent resolution, Doubtful summoned all his philosophy, and patiently resisted every effort of Combermere to accomplish either one of the aforesaid mishaps. In justice to the animal, we must say his efforts were unceasing; not a carriage, nor a van or vehicle of any description, did he pass without a sedulous effort to run either into or against it.

After a most uneasy amble, Dick at length reached the park, gained the sward, and gave his impatient nag that license of bridle which Dick was quite convinced would take all the fire out of him. Off went Combermere, but the more he went, the more he seemed inclined to go; and on gaining the Kensington end of the park, where in those days a swing bar was put up, and only opened for the royal carriages, Combermere, with a daring worthy of his name, once more got the bit between his teeth, and Dick, sweetly unconscious of any such propensity in any horse whatever, suffered extreme peril of his neck, as well as a severe rebuke from a distant sentry by his nag coolly leaping over the obstacle and darting into the western road. The ill-sorted pair here quickly encountered the first turnpike. Doubtful, like an honest constitutional liege as he was, prepared to pay the tax; but Combermere, as if imbued with the despotic licence and irregularity of the East, would listen to no impost of the kind: away he darted right a-head, spurning alike the vociferations of the toll-keeper in the rear, or the dangers that lay in his path in advance. In vain the former ran and cried, "Stop thief! runaway!" and other courteous epithets. The public saw Dick's hand alternating between his waistcoat pocket and his bridle, and not much caring whether this was the sham of an experienced pike-bilker, or the agony of an inexperienced horseman, looked on, laughed, and said nothing.

"This is a very awkward," said Dick, "a *very* awkward predicament to be placed in; I wish that the devil had those fellows at the livery-stables if this thief goes on in this way to Roehampton. I shan't be able to walk for a week." Then, as Dick looked on the road around him, and recognised the fact that he was journeying post to Brentford, he for the first time in his life acknowledged a deep sympathy with a certain unhappy tailor who performed the same journey with a manifest preference of his horse's tail to his bridle.

Now Combermere delighted to gallop close to the path side, and both ladies and gentlemen passengers thereon were indulged with particles of all the accumulated mud which his hoofs flung up; now he would keep crossing before some carriage posting down at a gallop as furious as his own; now he would take the wrong side of the road, and keep it too, while not unfrequently he would pass some fellow equestrian so close as almost to knock knees with him. That this conduct on a high road

should be popular was impossible; and Doubtful at last, in sheer despair, determined to make an effort against the tyranny which bore him thus furiously onward, and if not altogether to stop, at least to turn off from the crowded thoroughfare which was taking him away from his destined point, and to gain that less frequented, and for him more direct, road to Richmond. Like the gods in Homer's Iliad, one half of this wish Combermere accepted, the rest he dispersed to empty air. Though his steed showed no signs of being blown, he still wisely determined to keep the bit in his mouth for future use and occupation. Whether he turned to the right or to the left seemed to him a perfect matter of indifference, provided he was allowed to *go* somewhere: once, in a narrow and by-lane, and Doubtful himself, always excepting his soreness, had not much objection to the increased speed, accordingly away they went along, dashed in a short space into the Putney road, and then held straight a-head for Fulham and the parts beyond.

As Dick had risen very early that morning, and snatched but a slight repast at breakfast, he had at various times in the day felt a strong inclination for some slight stay by way of luncheon; but the remembrance of Sprightly's pressing injunction to do justice to his fare, the ardour with which his Eastern friend dwelt upon curried shell-fish, and the bitter disappointment which his hospitality seemed likely to feel at any indifference exibited towards his table, had induced our friend to prefer the pangs of starvation.

This fact rendered his rapid speed less disagreeable to him, and he soon arrived at the second turnpike on the Fulham road. Once more Dick made an effort to pay, but Combermere treated it with equal contempt with the first, and the 'pike-keeper thinking he possessed a ticket to clear, contented himself with simply looking after the rider, and saying "that's a *going it*," which it certainly was; and the same pace was most untiringly kept up until Dick found himself entering the streets of Fulham.

Nearly ignorant of the locality, from having only traversed it once or twice before, Doubtful conceiving himself wholly unknown, now made but a very gentle effort to arrest his steed, which the latter took as an encouragement the other way; and Dick no longer fearing a fall from the motion, and perfectly cognizant that it was the one which afforded him most comfort, soon resigned himself to his horse's control. A sudden turn in the road brought him in sight of a curious-looking building, which the fading light rendered still more anomalous: it was neither a house nor an archway, but partook of the characters of both; he had an indistinct glimmering also of having seen it somewhere before, though his strongest effort failed in recollecting where. A little low pony chaise stood on one side of the way under the arch, and what with Doubtful's skill being required to go clear of this, and his attention being fixed to recollect the nature of the building, before he was at all cognizant of what he was about, he had darted past the gate, and was already far advanced upon the roadway of Putney bridge. No sooner did our friend behold the broad and majestic Thames swelling out on either side of him, beneath the painted railings, than he became pain-

fully aware of his locality. Nor was this all which forced upon him the knowledge of his position, the animated crab-apple with the white apron that then resided under the gateway aforesaid, left the prey that he had already secured, and darted forward, shouting at the top of his voice—"Toll—Stop—Stop Toll!"—then as he found that Dick's pace was not at all moderated by these expressions, he sharpened them up to the words "Bilk—Cheat—Runaway"—and other terms of endearment that seem especially to belong to the vocabulary of 'pike-men—toll-keepers—*et id genus omne*. Nor was this all, seeing there was a great chance of his being absolutely cheated out of threepence, he, corpulent and apoplectic as he was, ran puffing and blowing at the heels of Combermere as rapidly as he could, making at the same time every species of clamour in order to alarm his brother extortioner at the other end of the bridge. Not wholly it seems without a precedent for these flying passengers, the toll-keeper at the Putney end no sooner heard the rout than he was aware of its purpose, and while Doubtful was only a hundred yards from his station, another white-aproned ball, who seemed a very counterpart of the white-aproned crab-apple, rolled swiftly forth, slammed fast the gate, and holding out his hand from a safe corner, bawled loudly forth—"Pay here!"

"I wish I could," mumbled Dick; "if the money were only down your infernal throat!" He had no time to say more, for Combermere took the shutting of the gate as a mere incitement to gambol—a little piece of playfulness on the part of the toll-keeper, and utterly disregarding all Dick's manipulations at the rein, as well as his half-mumbled exclamations of horror, went boldly at the six-foot gate with the spikes at the top of it, cleared it in a twinkling; and before the mouth of the toll-keeper had recovered from the astonishment which set it wide open, Doubtful had rapidly advanced up Putney-hill. After that, pursuit was useless; our hero paced boldly along the common, and having succeeded at length in somewhat moderating his speed, found that the sweet retreat of Roehampton lay on his right-hand side: hither then he directed his course, and after sundry inquiries and numberless directions, he arrived at a most romantic lane, lonely enough for any hermit of the London season, and fully answering all those descriptions by which London auctioneers are accustomed to let their houses. At the head of this lane, after many windings and standing perfectly alone, stood a cottage ornée, and on the brick pillars at its gates, the glaring colours of the new paint, stood forth sufficiently in the failing light of the evening to enable Doubtful's anxious eyes to read NEILGHERRY LODGE.

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

### WHICH CONTINUES DICK DOUBTFUL'S PURSUIT OF HIS DINNER.

"THANK Heaven at last," murmured the oracle of the Oracle, as breathless and faint from exhaustion and fatigue he fancied he beheld the end of his journey. His first act was to look at his watch, and he was gratified to find that he was before his time: knowing that he was expected, he imagined that the Colonel would pop out from the porch which he distinguished between the trees, and welcome him in to that longed-for *tête-à-tête* dinner and Eastern shell-fish curry which he had so eloquently described.

Not choosing to seem over anxious, and indeed very glad to get a little breathing space, he looked, and waited, and wondered that no one made their appearance; and after vainly trying to coax Combermere up to the bell-pull, he was fain most painfully to dismount, and apply himself with considerable vigour to the hospitable alarum. The bell sounded cheerfully in his ears, as it poured forth its peal; it had that right merry dinner-echoing sound which a hungry gentleman who has left the metropolis for green peas and a friend's dinner holds next in estimation—ay and sometimes even in preference, to the sweetest quartette at the Italian Opera. Delightfully as the bell sounded, it peeled forth all its melody without that succeeding accompaniment upon which so much of its magic pleasantness depends; we allude to the quick shuffle of the well-powdered footman's shoes on the gravel-walk, which very intelligibly, though not distinctively, cries "All's right." This delightful symphony, we say, was not to be heard: at first its absence produced little alarm in the mind of the listener; he turned round to his friend Combermere, patted him on the head, told him he was a fine fellow, assured him of his unceasing regard, and begged him not to leap over any more six-feet toll-gates. By this time ten minutes had elapsed.

"The servants are busy laying dinner," thought Dick, "they mayn't hear me, I'll give another peal." This he accordingly did, listening with some suspense to the full and ample sounds produced. "Was that a step upon the gravel?"—No, it was but the sweeping gust of the evening breeze, as it rose mournfully and shook some of the abundant foliage within view.

"Well," thought our friend, "I'll walk Combermere up and down a little, as he is somewhat warm, for fear he should catch cold. It's very odd"—after taking a turn or two—"it's very odd. What can be the meaning of it? and he desired me to be so punctual! however, patience, and shuffle the cards: the breeze sets in coldly when the sun goes down. Confound that Sprightly! what can have become of him? a glass of his East-India Madeira were much better than waiting out here. Devil take the fellow; I must remember and pay those turnpikes as I go home to-morrow, or I shall have the authorities about my ears. If ever you catch me on the back of Master Combermere

again,—why, no matter." Doubtful took another turn with his steed, and after pausing again in wonderment, gave this time a most ferocious surge at the electric wire which was to produce results so much desired by himself. Finding that no one appeared, that which had hitherto been patient resignation, began to assume the colour of incipient alarm. Dick was not particular in his gastronomic propensities, far from it: feasting might be a good thing, but a little of it went a long way with him, yet still he had no idea of mortifying his flesh without very sufficient inquiry. "Can that fellow be playing me a trick?" And Doubtful, with the bridle in his hand, endeavoured by short jumps to elevate his vision above the high gates, and see if he could detect the Colonel peeping through the blinds. "He was always a devil of a fellow for his nonsense; and those Irishmen are never very steady. Well, if so, as soon as he's had his fancy out, I may have my innings within: not but that it is rather a questionable taste this keeping a guest outside your gates—that's the devil of it: men who are fond of practical jokes never can distinguish. It's lucky there are no houses near; 't wouldn't be very pleasant to have a thousand persons looking on, to see one made a fool: however, trick for trick is the best plan to go upon; if he does not let me enter at this next ring, I'll mount my horse, ride off as if I gave it up in despair, and so bring him to his senses."

While Dick's choler was thus rapidly rising, Combermere had gained time to recover that full wind which had been a little tried by his amusements; and seeing no fun in staring at a green gate, nor yet any chance of obtaining any of the corn within it, began to add his impatience to that of his present master. However frequently Dick jumped, he could see nothing; and determining that this should be his last pull, he put forth all his strength, drew down the handle of the bell with a tremendous jerk, and had the satisfaction of hearing the wire snap, as well as the clapper within.

"The devil!" said Dick, "that is the last pull with a vengeance."

After a few seconds' waiting, while the bell went ding, ding, ding, in a manner which proved its deep sympathy and great reluctance to be quiet, no one came—no one stirred—no one opened the door—not a pace was heard on the gravel-walk—and the green gate remained as complete a fixture as ever.

"This seems very singular; can I have mistaken the house? he certainly told me Neilgherry Lodge; I never could have invented such an out-of-the-way phrase; and it's not like Flora Cottage or Paradise Villa, or any of your regular cockney congregations of retirement, and certainly this is Neilgherry Lodge," going up to the name and spelling it, "N E I L: yes, there's no mistake about that. Well, this is very strange; it certainly must be something more than a joke. Does he always receive his friends at dinner-hour in this manner?"

Dick now retired into the middle of the road, and took a stedfast survey of the premises. For the first time he remarked, that not one of the chimneys emitted the slightest wreath of smoke. "That settles the question," said Dick, nodding his head; "there must be something

wrong." The moment Dick had an opportunity of doubting, he was happy; the exercise of that noble faculty at once appeased the pangs of hunger, soothed the irritation of annoyance, and even acted like an opiate upon his aching bones. He returned to the inhospitable post, and leaning his back against the barred gate, laid on Combermere the ridiculous injunction to be quiet, rested his fore finger against his thumb, and proceeded to argue the case in due form.

"Now," said Dick, "this is either a case of quiz upon me, and Sprightly has never resided in the house at all; or secondly, if residing in the house, it is another case of quiz, and he is looking out from the windows; thirdly, he may be residing in the house and not at home, in consequence of some accident having happened to him; fourthly, he may have resided in the house and removed his residence, and so have given me his old address in mistake; or fifthly, there may be two Neilgherry Lodges in this neighbourhood. In the first case, it is useless to stay here; in the second case, my pretending to go off would be the only means of getting him to show himself; in the third case, my staying here will be equally futile, and the case seems equally improbable, since whatever has happened to the master, the servants ought to be at home; in the fourth case, I shall be unable to help myself till I see him again; and in the fifth case, my only remedy is to inquire of my neighbours: therefore, in any view of the affair, I must bid adieu to my dinner at present, and endeavour to regain the back of the gallant Combermere. The devil of the thing is I'm so stiff. No matter."

After numberless efforts, two or three false starts, much coaxing, and considerable difficulty, Doubtful once more found himself mounted, and his charger ready as ever to take to the old pace. To this, however, Dick objected; curbing the gentleman up pretty tightly, he paused opposite the next villa at which he arrived, and this time succeeded in ringing the bell without dismounting. In a few minutes a servant came to the gate.

"Will you tell me which is Colonel Sprightly's residence?"

The servant, who was a regular specimen of the London footman, lounged very carelessly against the door which he scarcely opened, and replied, surlily, "No, I can't," and slammed the gate in the face of the inquirer.

"That's civil, at any rate," said Dick; and with a readiness that rarely forsook him, he called out, Won't you allow me, my good fellow, to give you this sixpence for your trouble?"

The servant now opened the door and put out his hand with a most subservient smile; on which Dick, mimicking his tones with great exactitude, said, "No, I can't," bowed low, and rode off.

"If I may judge of the neighbours," said Dick, "this is a remarkably pleasant, sociable, agreeable place to reside in—but come, it's no use to be disheartened; I must try and get some information;" and the disappointed diner-out pulled up at the next villa. To Doubtful's inexpressible joy, a very pretty servant-girl came to the gate; and as our friend prided himself upon being very strong with the ladies, he put his question in the most insinuating manner, "Can you favour me

with Colonel Sprightly's address?" but the party to whom the appeal was made, in terms equally courteous, assured Doubtful that she could not, but she would ask her master.

Chesterfield has said that, from the manners of the servant we may always decide upon those of the superior. Although this assertion generally contains much truth, the present was a marked exception to the rule; for in a few minutes Doubtful heard a distant grumbling and growling, and presently two forms were seen.

"What the devil do you mean, you stupid fool?" mumbled the grumbling voice, "by leaving the gate open to strangers at this time of night."

"I am sure, sir," began the other—who was the pretty maid-servant—in a low tone, "such a nice spoken gentleman could never mean no harm."

"Ah, you fool, you speak like a woman: all thieves, pickpockets, and swindlers are nice spoken; they can't afford to be otherwise." And the broacher of this philosophy, confident of its truth, ran into the opposite extreme, seemingly ignorant that rough-spoken rogues are equally plenty, and only rogues of a later make, when the tactics of dissimulation became deepened. In a few minutes, however, both the master and maid stood in the gateway; the former advanced one or two feet before his companion, and his corporation advanced one or two feet before him; his hands being thrust into his breeches pocket, with his hat on one side, and his face puffed out with his own importance, and as red as a purple anemone.

"Well, what do you want?" demanded this pattern of politeness.

"Can you oblige me with the information of Colonel Sprightly's address? I believe he lives somewhere in this neighbourhood."

"No, he don't," answered the man, without further circumlocution.

"Indeed, sir," said Dick, who was too possessed a person to be put aside by any low-bred personage, "I had understood that he resided somewhere in this immediate vicinity, at a place called Neilgherry Lodge."

"Colonel Who, did you say?" demanded the fat man.

"Sprightly, sir," said Doubtful.

"Ay, Sprightly enough, I'll warrant me," returned the other. "I tell you what, young shaver, if you come here with any more of your tricks and your gammon, you stand a chance of being ducked in a horsepond. If there is such a person living here as you mention, I've no doubt he's little better than a swindler; and, as likely as not, you're one of the same kidney, or you would not come ringing at people's bells at this time of night for people that were never heard of."

"What do you mean, you atrocious old thief? do you mean to insinuate that my friend, Colonel Sprightly, of Neilgherry Lodge"—

"Colonel Fiddlestick! I tell you there's no such a place as Neilgherry Lodge in the neighbourhood."

"But I say there is."

"But I say there is not."

"But I say I've seen it."

"I say you lie then; for I've lived here forty years, and I must have known it."

"Use your own eyes," said Dick, giving a cut at the fat man with his horsewhip, "before you dare to offer that coarse insult to a gentleman."

"No, I wont," replied the stout man; and suddenly slamming the gate in Dick's face, he hit the high-spirited Combermere such a rap on the nose as at once terminated all further intercourse, quarrel, or dispute between them.

"John—John!" shouted the fat man to his groom.

"Ees, sir," shouted back the man to his master; and his quick steps were heard coming across the garden to his rescue.

These were, indeed, preludes to a serious war. Dick Doubtful heard them not. Combermere had taken high offence at the treatment offered to him, and turning his back upon such plebeian company, recurred to his old trick of taking the bit between his teeth as he dashed along. Dick looked right and left for some more friendly roof tree where he might ask a harmless question without being taken either for a swindler or the kidney of one: none such appeared. Combermere swept swiftly on, and in the course of a few minutes he found himself once more upon Wimbledon Common.

It had originally formed part of Doubtful's plan, after taking a bed at the house of his friend Sprightly, to proceed to Wimbledon, near which place Sir Job Periwinkle had lately been residing with that remnant of his family which his distresses had spared to him. When, however, Combermere proved on the second day so much less tractable than he had been on the former, Dick questioned the propriety of proceeding on horseback as he had originally intended. But now the case had altered once more. He found himself at the beginning of night with a heavy spring shower threatening in the west, in a condition of something very like starvation; without a possibility of getting into the house to which he had been invited, tired and jaded to death, more than eight miles from London, and scarcely a quarter that distance from Wimbledon; near which latter place were friends who would be delighted to see him, where every rest and refreshment could be obtained, and where, more than all, there dwelt a fair divinity to whom in secret Dick had long offered up his vows. Involved in a threefold share of doubt—even more than belongs to a passion, which is in itself the very essence of dubitation, Dick had hemmed and hesitated, and pondered so long on every word and motive, that scarcely as yet had he ventured to intimate to the lady of his love the warm nature of his sentiments, otherwise than by that perpetual following, which young ladies always seek, sometimes get, from little dogs in strings. The lady formed a great temptation, it must be confessed; and after some difficulty, Dick yielded to it, and turning his horse's head, rattled across the common, up the tremendous hill which bounds it, and at length, full of joy, arrived at Sir Job's residence. We may easily conceive his joy on once more sounding a signal for admittance, where at least he thought there was no doubt of his happy admission. In a few minutes he heard the servant coming, and

was already preparing to jump off, and give up all further care of his nag, when the man opening the door gave, unasked, that melancholy intimation—"There's no one lives here now, sir." The blow was so severe that though Dick did not absolutely lose his seat, he staggered in the saddle like one who has received the mortal thrust of his enemy's lance.

"Not live here! nobody live here! Where's Sir Job and Lady Periwinkle then?"

"Gone to Hawarden Hall, sir."

"How far off is that?"

"Six miles to the left of Kingston, sir."

"What, does nobody live here now?"

"Nobody but I and my wife, sir. It's a very nice place with five-and-thirty rooms in it, sir, if you thinks of taking one. But my missis generally likes those who comes to see the house to come a little earlier. There's a beautiful dining-room and pantry, sir. The last owner was a very hospitable gentleman; and he used to give rare dinners here surely."

"Alas! I know it, too well I know it," sighed Dick. "And I fondly dreamed of seeing one of them this night." Then while he mused on his misfortunes, his mind reverted to a passage in Hector's parting address to Andromache:—

> "While some proud Greek who lives thy grief to see,
> Embitters all thy woes by naming me."

"A fine dining-room and pantry unfurnished! and this to a man who had been nursing his appetite for a first-rate *tête-à-tête* dinner, and an Indian shell-fish curry. Was it possible there could be a greater cruelty? It penetrated Doubtful to the quick. "Thank you, thank you, my good friend, I've no necessity for seeing either the dining room or the pantry, as they are empty; neither do I conceive at present any violent affection for taking a house with five-and-thirty rooms in it; but"—and here Doubtful, although nearly fainting, felt his natural bashfulness so great, that he hardly liked to make the request he contemplated—"but if you could oblige me with a glass of table-beer," putting his hand in his pocket to give the man a trifle.

"I'm sorry to say, sir, my missis has such a nateral aversion to beer, she won't let me keep a drop of it," said the poor hen-pecked wretch, who no more dared to have given away a crumb of bread or a glass of water, than to have trusted himself in the air on a broomstick.

At this moment a shrill screaming voice was heard in his rear, demanding—"Thomas, you idle fool, what do you stand loitering there for—talking to a pack of lazy vagrants this time of night?" and straightway there appeared at his elbow a little vixen of a woman two or three sizes larger than the child she carried, with a thin scraggy neck sufficiently vouching for the vinegar cast of her disposition; her eyes red with crying and sulking; and while her dress was that of a slattern, a gaudy artificial flower was stuck in her hair, as a compensating piece of finery.

"This gentleman," timidly said the husband, "would be glad of a glass of beer."

"Let him get it at the public-house then," said the hospitable wife. "Shut the door directly. Come you in, and get to bed. Do you think I and my child are to starve while you give beer to every lazy vagabond who comes here after dark?" And the little wife, who should not only have been put to bed, but well whipped before she had been put there, began dragging her husband by the arm, and attempting to close the massive portal which he held open.

"'Pon my word," muttered Dick, "from the treatment I get, one might almost imagine that I had fallen on that spot—

> 'Still further, where the rude Carinthian boor
> Against the houseless stranger shuts the door.'

Here's a pretty little devil for one of the soft sex! but I must endeavour to get what I want in the *im*material line. Stay, my good man, before you shut the door"—spurring his horse into the open space, so as to prevent the closing of the gate, "Before you retire for the night, be good enough to tell me how I shall find Sir Job Periwinkle's residence."

"Certainly, sir—certainly," said the unfortunate helot of female domination; a great broad fellow, that might have swallowed up the little tyrant as readily as the gulf in the Forum devoured Curtius, and who knew, from long experience of his wife's amiabilities, that though possessed of no information herself, she rarely grudged its being given to others—provided it cost her nothing. "You can't well miss the road to Sir Job Periwinkle's, sir; it's straight on, and take the last turning to the left before you get to the town; it is called Hawarden Hall, six miles the other side of Kingston."

"There, that's quite enough, Thomas," said the termagant from behind. "Come in, and shut the door directly."

"Stay, madam," said Dick, who was particularly pleased with her conduct, "will you not accept something for the trouble I have given you?" The woman's face brightened up in a moment, and stepping out of the shadow where she had stood, she advanced to Dick's side with extended hand. The mischievous Doubtful, however, plunging his heels into Combermere's side, made the latter rear most violently, and then kindly added, in the softest tone, "Bless my soul, madam, it was imprudent of you, knowing you were so ugly, to frighten my horse. Come a little closer, will you?" But the little vixen had heard quite enough, and seeing that the stranger was only making fun of her, slammed fast the gate, bolted it in an instant, and turned round and boxed her husband's ears most heartily. The latter operation Doubtful but indistinctly witnessed, since, in addition to the intervention of a brick-wall, he had himself given the rein to the far-darting Combermere, and soon left the hospitable portal of Sir Job's former residence far out of sight.

It was now a matter of debate with our friend whether he should go

back to London, or forward to Sir Job's. The image of the lady very soon prevailed over every other attraction. "Term is over,—that's one good thing," said Doubtful; and I have some right to a holiday, if I choose to take it. 'Twill only be a mere forty minutes' ride, thanks to Sprightly's spirited horse-flesh: though it is true enough that in all probability I shall not be able to put one leg before another to-morrow. However, I begin to think there's more pleasure in the exercise than I imagined." And with these and similar ruminations, Dick resolved to take a pleasant four days' rest at Hawarden Hall, and return at leisure to the sublime occupation of writing out cases for the columns of the Oracle, and waste his health between immaterial occupations of his own and the material business of other people.

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## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH

### CONTAINS A NIGHT SURPRISE.

The weather for the season was remarkably fine; the moon in its second week rose brilliantly over the wide expanse of Wimbledon Common, and the old windmill stood forth in splendid relief against the bright sky behind it: as the night-breeze swept freshly along, Dick asked himself if this was not just such a scene as Rembrandt would have delighted to pourtray. Thoughts of this celebrated painter led Dick into a reflection on the arts, which though he only knew them at a distance, still appeared to him an agreeable mode of passing the time: he then began to consider what would be the best subject for a picture, and mentally resolved that the four judges of the Exchequer in banco on one of the red days, with scarlet robes, and the full glare of the skylight falling upon them, &c., would present about one of the finest subjects for the historical flight of art that could be easily imagined. "It's astonishing," muttered Dick, "what singular forms the broken moonlight and ragged banks present. Yonder shadows now almost look like the top of a man on horseback. What a delightful place this is for an evening ride!" Scarcely had these gentle accents fallen in soliloquy from Dick's lips, when Combermere made a sudden motion with his ears, first forward, and then laying them flat back, the singular shadow of the man on horseback darted full into the road, and a voice of thunder cried in his ear, "Surrender on your life." Dick just indistinctly saw a pistol presented, and down went his head on the neck of his horse, while the latter animal shyed to the right to avoid the threatening stranger, and the whiz of a ball and the sharp quick report of a pistol reached his ear at the same moment together. It was now that the gallant Combermere showed his true mettle, as putting forth all his strength spring after spring, he cleared the road in the most rapid manner; while Dick, who for the first time only began to

know what was the real speed at which his horse could move, felt his heart flutter within him at the flying motion, and while he clung to the pommel of the saddle with both hands, and lowered his body as much as possible to avoid the shot of the enemy, he trembled at every step lest his horse, who was now going down the hill towards Richmond Park, should stumble, and finish his troubles and his neck at the same moment.

"Stop, stop, you fool, or I'll blow your brains out!" shouted the same dreaded voice from behind. Dick heeded not the summons, he contented himself with holding up Combermere's head slightly, and allowing the glorious animal to follow his own speed.

"Stop, I say, or I'll fire—I will by ——."

"If I stop now—no matter," cried Dick in return.

Suddenly Doubtful plainly heard the hoofs of some other comrade in atrocity advancing along another road that led into the main track, and he could plainly perceive the head of the rider advancing along in an acute angle over the heath. Now the whole body of the horse, as well as the rider, being shown where the road was not so deep, and now both being all but hid as the rising of the banks obscured them from his view.

"Quick—quick—we've got him at last!" shouted the villain from behind, in tones every word of which Doubtful distinctly heard. "Cut him off—cut him off at the joining of the roads!"

"Good heavens!" muttered Doubtful, "what bloody-minded villains; think of their waiting and way-laying me in this manner. I never can escape two; and if ever I'm lucky enough to report in the Exchequer again—no matter. Well, I won't give in at any rate—go it, Combermere—go it, Combermere," patting his steed on the neck, who, stimulated to fresh exertions, threw out his fore feet in the most splendid manner, simultaneously sending up in the face of his pursuer a shower of dust and gravel, which nearly blinded him.

"Make haste—make haste," cried the man behind to his comrade. "Now we've got him. Cut him off at the cross-road."

"Cross-road," echoed Dick—"think of being cut off at a cross-road. How many a place have I seen in old Ireland where such a thing has happened! How little I ever dreamt of coming to such a horrible fate myself!—Go it, Combermere—go it, Combermere," once more patting the eastern hero's neck. Then pursuing the train of his exclamations—"How thankful I feel to the honest stable-keeper for giving him so much corn. As the saying is, if he had not the corn in him he never could go this pace."

In the mean time, near and more near at every moment appeared the glancing figure of the horseman darting across the common. The cries of anger and revenge swelled every second more fiercely and loudly in his ear.

"Why the devil don't you drive a bullet through his head?" demanded the new-comer, as he got within hail.

"You try and cut him off at the cross-roads first," cried the other.

as he laid on his horse the full burthen of a heavy whip, every sound of which came distinctly to the ears of Dick, horrifying him with the inevitable certainty that such cruel punishment must ensure the suffering steed out-stripping his own. Fortunately, however, Combermere heard these stripes as well as his master; and at every sweep of the high-wayman's horsewhip through the air, renewed energy and blood appeared to invigorate Combermere's haunches, and away he sprang, gallantly taking the lead beyond all competition.

"I—can—im-a-gine—now," mumbled Dick, as the breath was almost driven out of his body, "why men sought to make gods of their horses—bless my soul, this second villain must be coming very close; why I declare I see the moon shining through the gap where his road runs into mine. Now or never—go it, Combermere—go it, Combermere."

"Cut him off, I say—cut him off."

"I can't, I can't—he's gaining a-head of me. Blow his brains out, you're nearest him."

"No, you fool, we can only do that at the last."

"*Only*," muttered Dick—"*only* blow my brains out at the last. What considerate villains!"

"I tell you," cried the interceptor, "he's better mounted than I am, and he goes two paces to my one."

"Thank Heaven for that!" cried Dick; "but he appears to me to go twenty for mine."

"Why the devil don't you drive your spurs into him?" cried the ruffian in Dick's rear, who, to his heated imagination, seemed so close that he expected every moment to feel his grasp on his collar.

"You've only a few yards more," proceeded the instructor of the two, "and if you give him the spur to the rowel he'll clear that at a bound."

"I'll try it; but you're a damned fool not to nab him while he's almost in your hand."

"Never you mind that—there, go a-head. Now you'll do it, you'll cut him off yet. Keep your nag up to that—now spur—spur—there you go, drive bang against him—knock him over—jam him up against the other side of the road."

"What outrageous villany," muttered Dick; "to think of riding up against a man at this pace. If we do come together, nothing can save me from being knocked into atoms! Then if it does not take the rascals some days to pick me together again—no matter. It's all over with me—it's all over with me—I feel him coming: now for the shock. Oh, there's the angle of the road—it opens—now I see it. Thank Heaven! he has not gained it yet! Now, Combermere, now or never, get me out of this scrape, and, like a Roman emperor, I'll make you consul of my kingdom—here comes the thief full tear."

"Now you have him—whip and spur, my boy, drive full against him—d—n the fall, pin him against the bank; I'll cut him down if he attempts to get up."

*A. Nicholson Sculpt.*

At this moment all three of the contending parties had gained, within a few feet, that point of the road to which they had so often alluded, the two paths intersecting, an old finger-post stood up in the bright moonlight to direct all whom it might concern, that one route led to Wimbledon, and the other to Putney. The paint had long since been effaced from this venerable informant, and the many gales and storms which had passed over it, had chipped off, in various places, those rectilinear edges, corners, &c., which generally make finger-posts somewhat unpicturesque, until their original usefulness becomes a matter of tradition. To Dick's eyes nothing could look more beautiful than the rugged and deep shadow which this antique record of travel presented; it was a sort of link which connected him with that living world, which he had too much reason to fear would soon pass away for ever from his possession. He had only time to glance at it for a moment; but in that moment what a host of associations rushed upon him! All the coaches, mails, gigs, and other vehicles, on which he had either passed, or paused beneath a similar familiar index, flashed on his mind their dear departed memories. What would he not have given to have seen crouching beneath that finger-post, the jolly old figure of some fat coachman or a guard—a mail-coach guard, with his red coat and blunderbuss. The idea was happiness in the extreme. Or even a stout passenger, ay, or a mere beggar, the veriest pattern of rags and wretchedness, provided that he had only a tongue to cry out, and a thick stick to shake in the air. So convinced was Dick that any appearance of ordinary mortality would have scared from their prey the demons who were chasing him, that he looked and looked again, as if the very wish could conjure up what he desired, but it was all in vain; there stood the finger-post, cold, stern, and dark, not a moving thing beneath it save the horrible and rapidly-darting figures of the man and horse who dashed round the other side, amidst the redoubled shouting of the pursuer behind, and the execrations of both.

"Go it, go it—now's your time."

"Why don't you fire?"

"Drive slap into him—jam him up on the other side of the road."

And between these and other similar recriminations, Doubtful distinctly heard the horrible whizzing of the repeated and vengeful blows which fell on the pursuing horses. His heart sank within him, and he fairly gave himself up for lost; but involuntarily as it were he patted the neck of his own charger, and in mingled tones of kindness and despair, repeated his exhortations, "Go it, Combermere, go it—if ever you save your master's life, you'll save it now."

By this time the intercepting party appeared almost on his flank; but Doubtful's strained vision, like that of a coursed hare, took in the objects which were behind him, and presented these to his excited mind in that position in which they would naturally have been seen. The moon fell full upon the figure of the interceptor, tall, stout, and powerful in every way; the shadow came upon his own person, while he could distinctly perceive beneath the over-hanging hat the fierce con-

tracted brow, the glaring evil eye, the compressed mouth, the foam still hanging on the lip, and the broad and determined chin of a regular desperado. He held the bridle of his horse in his left hand, and by the glitter of the moonbeams, Doubtful discovered that he also carried a pistol in that hand, while with his right arm he most unceasingly showered upon his horse a succession of blows from a heavy horse-whip, which sounded distinctly along the echoing road, above even the thunder of their hoofs, that sounded like a charge of cavalry, and raised a cloud of dust along the common sufficient for the advance of a whole army.

"Now's your time—now's your time," shouted the man from behind him. "Drive right against him."

Some exclamation followed from the other, which Doubtful lost; though from after-circumstances he concluded it to have been the words, "I can't," since from the exertions he had made, and was still making, it was evident that this bravo was nearly exhausted; but from the sounds which we have mentioned, together with the seeming increasing quickness of their horses' feet, it was quite evident that they were nearing him, and also that both were making the very climax of their exertions. But to Dick's infinite joy, while he lay patting the neck of Combermere, his eye imperceptiby lost the figure of the cloaked horseman on the left. The moon threw his shadow more and more aslant the road; and he had already gained the middle of the gap, where the junction of the two courses was effected, when a sudden cry of rage arose from the new-comer.

"Shoot him! damn him! or he'll escape."

"No—give your horse one good spur more, and you must drive right into him; up to the very heel with it!"

A fearful execration here followed, and the horse gave a tremendous spring. Dick saw the shadow of its rider shooting past him; the threatening forms of both once more became distinct; while the neck of the other animal, outstretched, and intensely eager from the punishment it had sustained—its red, bloodshot eye glaring like a ball of fire in the darkness of the night—dashed just against his horse's shoulder. With a readiness that did great credit to his presence of mind, he seemed to foresee the outstretched arm intended to grasp him, and throwing himself with full weight on the near stirrup, bent his body so as to elude the clutch; while Combermere, indignant at this violation of his person, threw out his heels with tremendous fury, striking both rider and steed opposed to him, on the head, neck, and thigh. Down they came to the ground with a heavy fall and a shrill cry of pain; and Dick was triumphantly borne a-head, past every danger, and right down the steep declivity of that long, and, in those days, very dangerous hill.

"Thank God! if you're not settled, no matter," said Dick, with a deep aspiration of joy, that seemed to come from the innermost corner of his soul. He now saw there was some chance of his winning the day, and as this bright hope dawned upon him, began to enter into the

spirit of the chase; that timidity and apprehension, too, which is the greatest cause of bad riding, was now rapidly wearing off, as his blood, heated with the exertion, circulated rapidly through the system, and by its accelerated pace, increased the electric power on which life seems to depend. As the wind was blowing deliciously from the south-east, Dick could distinctly hear the groans and cries that proceeded from the man he had upset; but this, however slight the credit it may do to his philanthropy, Doubtful certainly did sustain with wonderful philosophy. There were other intonations, however, which seemed to possess greater interest; inasmuch as the man behind, taking no notice of his wounded comrade, still continued to hang upon Dick's rear, with as much relentless determination as ever.

"Stop, you fool—stop, I say, you infernal fool, or I'll send a bullet through you!"

Dick, however, not seeming to hold the highwayman's moral or intellectual information in sufficient account to follow the advice here tendered, a brief, but brilliant, light shot over the path which our legal friend was pursuing in this hurried manner; and, while something whistled nervously by his ear, the sharp report of fire-arms informed him that the threat of the highwayman had been as nearly put into execution, as the power of the amiable gentleman would permit.

"It must be rather a nice matter," said Dick, when he perceived he was in a whole skin, "to take a good aim on horseback, at this pace. And what is to my mind still more extraordinary, is the ill-regulated state of police; which, on an open common, surrounded by dwellings, can allow a heartless and systematic endeavour, thus obstinately and openly pursued, to take away a man's life; accompanied, too, as this has been, with a frequent discharge of fire-arms!"—Dick most firmly believing, in his own mind, that, at least, a dozen pistols had been discharged at him, in the course of the short career which he had that night held.

In the mean while, the man behind, finding his aim inefficient, and his chase ineffectual, began rapidly to tire of the pursuit; while Combermere having discovered that he was beating his competitors in high style, seemed to gather fresh courage from the fact; and, gaining at last the bottom of the long hill, gave a loud snort of defiance, and away he went up the one next succeeding with undiminished speed.

Now Dick had heard that this spot, to which he was coming, was even more famous for gentlemen of the road, than the common which had produced the pretty specimen behind him. "If," said he, a "fresh pair should start out from these thickets, I can't expect even the gallantry of Combermere to carry me through; but 'faint heart never won fair lady.'"

At every ten yards' distance, Dick turned his head to mark the pace of his adversary; and, on gaining the top of the hill, which is faced on one side by Caen Wood, and on the other by Richmond Park, Doubtful had the inexpressible joy of being able neither to see nor hear anything of the second highwayman. Concluding therefore that he

had now completed his escape, he resolved to give a little breathing-time to Sprightly's horseflesh.

Our readers may conceive the pride and joy with which an inexperienced horseman, a man of peace and gentleness, listened to the breathing of the animal that had gone so splendidly, and the tumult of his own heart, which had beat so fearfully during the chase he had undergone; and, in the calm stillness of the night, each sound echoed like a note of triumph; while the beauty of the scene suddenly changed the period from one of deadly peril to a moment of extreme delight. The moon had now risen to one third of her height; and while the subdued rays were sufficiently mild to induce the eye to rest upon their beauty, the bright orb itself became a part of the picture which the senses took in: before him lay the rounded outline of a deep grove, below which the country stretched away in soft meandering lines of light and shadow, until the blue hills of the distant horizon bounded the prospect; on his right, the town of Kingston, now beginning to be seen, filled up the valley, while the regal Thames glanced like a silver arrow, for a moment, amid the buildings of the city, and then was lost to sight; on his left hand, was the deep descent up which he had so recently bounded, and this lay hid in impenetrable gloom, while the brilliant light rested fully on the long stretch of Wimbledon Common, and the sails of the windmill momentarily arrested the rays of the moon passing over it; behind him, stretched away the beautiful park of Richmond; and, as Dick, turning in his saddle, beheld its seemingly interminable groves, memory wandered to the traditionary interest which belongs to that spot, whence the brutal Harry witnessed the signal proclaiming him the murderer of one of our loveliest queens.

Immersed in these reflections, he for a time forgot the peculiar circumstances that had accompanied his evening's ride. A sudden motion, however, of Combermere's head recalled him to a more fitting observation; and, observing the creature throwing its ears forward, and then laying them back, suspending its heavy breathing, and altogether giving symptoms of uneasiness, he, too, took the alarm and listened. "Was it? No—he heard nothing—and yet, surely, that was very like the fall of a horse's hoof—still, the hard road would certainly give forth a louder sound than that—there certainly was however a sound." —It increased both in noise and frequency. Combermere turned towards it, shook his head, and then endeavoured to start off: Dick reined him up for a moment, to be convinced that he was not flying from a shadow, and, stooping low, endeavoured to bring up into the horizon the figure of any person who might be advancing on horseback. "There certainly was a figure stealing onwards cautiously beneath the shadow of the trees near the park wall—and yet, it might be only fancy."

This dubious matter, so important to our friend, and over which he would unquestionably have remained hesitating, until he had fallen into any trap that lay for him, was at once decided by Combermere, who, having never reported either in the Exchequer or for the Oracle, was a gentleman of much more decided wits than his master. Seeing clearly

how the case stood, he gave a loud and sudden neigh, which, in a few seconds, was answered from the direction in which Doubtful had seen the suspicious figure: a loud oath followed almost simultaneously from the same quarter, and Dick's friend, the highwayman, slipt into the road from the velvety bank, on which he had been cautiously creeping along. "The devil!" quoth Dick; and involuntarily his legs clasped the body of the horse, and his hand gave a jerk on the bridle; but Combermere little needed this hint to proceed; to him it appeared a mere matter of fun his master was enjoying; and never having felt what it was to come in actual contact with five or six drachms of lead, commonly called a bullet, we must forgive him for entertaining a very imperfect notion of what it was to be shot at. He speedily, however, had an opportunity of correcting his views of this subject, for the chasing party, who had taken the precaution to re-load his pistols during the few bars' rest which had occurred in Dick Doubtful's running accompaniment, now took a third and more deliberate aim than any which he had yet formed, and firing with as much coolness as was practicable, the ball grazed Combermere's back, and lodged in the saddle. Dick felt most palpably that something had struck something; he had distinguished the twitch of his coat, the passage of the ball beneath him, and a crashing of the wood, as the bullet made its way through the saddle frame; but he certainly was not prepared for the way in which the tried hero of Oriental fields received this overture to the combat. The horse now, for the first time, thoroughly frightened, dashed, like the herd of swine, "furiously down the steep place" that leads into the town of Kingston with a speed that, in Dick's opinion, outstripped even that which he had exercised before. The highwayman followed with equal energy; and albeit, at every yard the race was less and less in his favour; he seemed determined that if perseverance could "cut a purse," he would have it. He now also, for the first time, began to raise a loud and most vehement war-cry, much in the same manner as if Dick had been the thief, and he had been the victim on more than one occasion. Afterwards, Doubtful was heard to confess that it did appear somewhat strange to him that a highwayman should thus openly and unblushingly pursue his avocation in a thoroughfare where he was liable every moment to be interrupted by passing coaches, chaises, carriages, and other travellers. It differed, Dick admitted, from what Dick had always read of the Turpin tribe; still knowing that practice is the best teacher of the law in all cases, he thought that the cut-purse behind might be some enthusiastic pursuer of his art, to whom all considerations of detection or capture were mere secondary matters. It must be confessed that Doubtful's position was not the best for deliberate consideration of a difficult matter: the hill, down which he was rushing with the swiftness of an avalanche, was one whose steepness would have rendered even a gentle trot somewhat venturesome; and what between the attention enforced by a plane so inclined, and the reproaches which Dick vented on himself for not having made the best of his way while it was in his power, it is little to be wondered at if his usually subtle powers of discrimination did in some degree fail him, while before

many minutes had elapsed, the demand upon their exercise was altogether suspended.

Our friend had not proceeded more than one third way down the abrupt descent, when a series of oaths and lamentations, accompanied by a deep groan, led him, as well as he could, to take a peep round at his follower. Who shall describe the infinite delight of the learned counsel on perceiving a dark and struggling mass in the middle of the road, which a few seconds more of observation plainly proved to be the highwayman and his steed delightfully rolling over one another in all the confusion of a regular downfall?

"You've tried very hard for that, my friend, and at last you have got it," exclaimed Dick; and although it is much to be doubted if this piece of information reached the ears of him for whom it was intended, Doubtful did not at any rate attempt to follow it up by pausing to make any inquiries. It is true he did try to pull up Combermere, but experience seemed to have acted as a much better lesson on the horse than it did on his master, so the former gallopped straight forward until he reached within a very short distance of the entrance of the town. Here, as there were no clattering of hoofs behind, and a more level space presented itself, Doubtful was enabled to descry the turning which he had been desired to take, and, leaving Kingston on the right-hand side, pursued his journey to Hawarden Hall. Through all that remained of his route, it must be admitted that Doubtful looked with more than ordinary anxiety at the shadows presented on each side of him, as if half expecting some new *compagnon de voyage;* he even doubted whether the last man were not a third cut-purse, who had slipped out to do a little business on his own account: so extraordinary did it appear to him that a lawless thief, however well mounted, should keep up a chase so obstinate. Highwaymen had that night darted up so plentifully on every side, that like Minerva from the head of Jove, they began to spring fully armed from his own brain. After what therefore might well be called an "interesting ride," he did at length arrive at the much-desired portal of Hawarden Hall. Putting out his hand, he rung the bell as a man might do in olden times of enchantment, witches, wizards, &c.; or as mortals of the present day would act in a dream—half expectant, namely, that the whole solid building before him would "melt, like the baseless fabric of a vision," and "leave not a wreck behind;" or that before the echoes of the bell had ceased, Mr. Highwayman should come up upon a steed of brimstone and fire, and claw him off. During the interval that the servant took to answer the bell, he rubbed his eyes repeatedly to ascertain that he had not been dreaming, and finding that he, Dick Doubtful, reporter in the Exchequer for the Legal Oracle, really awaited admission into Hawarden Hall, and that the porter, moreover, was lazily crossing the court-yard to admit him, he became somewhat more composed and satisfied; and having begged the servant to make haste, dashed desperately through the narrowest inlet that would admit his horse, ordered the gate to be quickly barred, and then with all the breath his lungs contained, cried "Heaven be praised!"

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

### PORTRAYS DICK DOUBTFUL IN LOVE.

"Does Sir Job Periwinkle live here?" eagerly demanded Doubtful, as soon as he could find breath enough to speak.

"Oh yes, Mr. Doubtful," said the porter, who well remembered our friend. "Sir Job, my lady, and young mistress, are all at home; they are just sitting down to supper, and glad they'll be, sir, to see you."

"Ah, indeed! that's great! They can't be half so glad to see me as I shall be to see them."

"Why, sir, you've ridden your horse a smartish pace hav'n't you?"

"Yes, my good fellow, I have. Are you much troubled with highwaymen in this neighbourhood?"

"Highwaymen, sir! I don't think there are any more than silly people talk of; I've never seen e'er a one, sir, or met any that could be believed to say so. Why, sir, what makes you ask?"

Here Dick was rather caught on the horns of a dilemma. With his usual caution, he had not ventured to state what had occurred to him before. He had felt his way to see how the intelligence would be received; and finding that it would be treated as somewhat marvellous, resolved to conceal the whole transaction, and at any rate to say nothing of the affair until he had slept upon it. Having seen the steed, to which he was so much obliged, led off to the stables, he endeavoured, to the best of his ability, to find his way into the presence of Sir Job and Lady Periwinkle. Somehow or other, however, each leg had a marvellously strong reluctance to advance before the other; and though he might have greatly improved his riding on the back of Combermere, his walking was altogether out of the question. Having limped through the length of the hall, he was there met by his most hospitable host with open arms; and while the latter shook him by both hands, expressed his gladness to see him, and wished him welcome, he perceived with regret that sorrow had worked its usual ravages both upon the face and figure of the patriot. Deep furrows on the brow and cheek—a stooping of the shoulders, and general wasting of the flesh, proclaimed at a glance how much Sir Job had suffered from the series of disasters which had so quickly followed one another in his family; while the frequent sigh, the abrupt wandering speech, the thoughtful and abstracted eye, all told the same story. Doubtful even fancied that he could discern the traces of more immediate annoyance; but whatever may have been the truth or error of these conjectures, they in no degree affected the welcome which he gave to the defender of his condemned and banished son, Paul; and having led him into the supper-room, Doubtful there found sitting at table, Lady and Miss Periwinkle. With the same tact which always characterised Dick's manner, he walked hastily up to the former, holding

out his hand, and saying, "How do you do, dear Lady Periwinkle? Now that I at last have the pleasure of paying my respects to you, I hope I may have the delight of congratulating you on the restoration of your health."

"There is nothing the matter with my health, sir—there never was;" and Lady Periwinkle rose from the table, and drew herself up with as much rigidity as if she had been the first giraffe imported from Africa, or a peacock particularly requested to show his tail. Instead of meeting Dick's proffered hand with her own, she employed this in offering to her aquiline nose a bottle of smelling salts; returning Dick's most respectful bow, with the merest motion that could be called a curtsey.

Dick, perfectly astonished at this circumstance, stood for a few seconds vacantly staring from Julia Periwinkle to her mother; but without being so much abashed as her ladyship seemed to think he ought to feel, he consoled himself for the rudeness of the mother by walking up to the daughter, and taking her hand, whether she would or not. Julia, who had followed the example of Lady Periwinkle in rising, had been standing gazing upon the ground, alternately blushing, and growing pale again; and although she really had not Doubtful's excuse for it, kept her eyes steadily fixed on her plate. Doubtful was, however, in all matters pertaining to the sex, a more skilful manœuvrer than could have been at first credited. He, therefore, with a very agile movement, in which he seemed to forget all the woes of horseflesh, lifted Julia's passive little hand to his lips, and printed sundry kisses on the same, while merely pretending to be bowing, and hoping that she was well. Sir Job, who saw nothing of this by-play, had, in the meanwhile, taken his wife to task for saying she never had been ill; and while they were indulging in one of those little family spars, which had become far from infrequent since the accusation of her son for the murder of his cousin, Doubtful wisely contrived to make the most of the opportunity by carrying on that conversation in which the heart hears so much, though the lips utter never so little.

As a faithful historian dealing with a professed reporter, we are naturally anxious to do justice to all the eloquence which may have been displayed by Doubtful on this occasion; but the difficulty of our case is apparent, for unless we had recourse to the Egyptian characters of eyes and dimples, smiles, sighs, and glances in all their affinity of combination, and rainbow chameleonism of colour, how would it be possible faithfully to repeat Love's telegraph? This, however, we may safely affirm, because it was observed by the butler, to whom we had to pay by the way half-a-crown for the information, that between every change of Dick Doubtful's plate, his right hand slipped down—quite by accident, of course—and finding—by equal accident—that of Julia Periwinkle, who sat by his side, mutely clasped it under the sacred shadow of the table-cloth. Lady Periwinkle, in the meanwhile, remained at the head of the table, with so acetic an aspect, that Dick Doubtful declared himself enabled to eat his salad without any further dressing.

"Now, the devil," muttered Dick, for he was always talking to himself, "there is something wrong here. If I allow that old thief, Lady

Periwinkle, to sit watching us like a cat, I shall never be able to have a word with Julia; for Lord knows what tricks she'll play to-morrow to keep her out of my way. Let me see now—however!—I'll manage her yet. The man who could ride and master such a horse as Combermere, is not to be foiled by the grey mare so easily. I must set her and Sir Job by the ears; and whilst they are busy fighting, I can go on with my affairs. What's the subject they fall out about most?—Oh! I have it. Pray, Sir Job," raising his voice to a conversational tone, "when did you hear last from your beautiful niece, Mrs. John Periwinkle?"

"Who, sir?" demanded her ladyship, discharging her broadside at this mark at once, and showing as much fire in her black eyes as might have exploded the Royal George without the trouble of Pasley's cylinders.

"Of course," said the malicious Dick, "I allude to your widowed niece, Miss Nora that was."

"Mr. Doubtful, I'm not at all aware, sir, what authority you have for giving her the title of the late Mr. John Periwinkle's widow. My belief is, sir, that she has no claim to it whatever; and once for all, I beg to assure you, that nothing can be more unpleasant or distressing than to mention that ungrateful person at my table."

If Lady Periwinkle's attack on Doubtful came in the shape of a broadside, the reply to it was absolute thunder.

"Madam!" said Sir Job, in a quick roll of deep bass that made the tumblers ring again—"I say, madam, that she was fully entitled to the style in which Mr. Doubtful mentioned her—poor Jack's widow!—I've no doubt of it; and I tell you further, madam, that she never was ungrateful; though God only knows what calamity has befallen her, or what unfortunate events may have caused her continued silence. And what's more, I tell you, madam, there is no name so pleasing to be mentioned as hers at a table which lost its brightest charm, in the absence of her grace, and worth, and beauty."

"That'll do," muttered Dick, "they'll fight on that for half-an-hour at least; they're bound to do that as man and wife." Then the deep hypocrite pretending to be quite shocked at the storm he had raised, gently bent his head till he could whisper in Julia's ear, and demanded, "Why have you never answered any of my letters?"

"I cannot," answered Julia, blushing.

"Why not, Julia? Did you not tell me I might write to you?"

Julia remained silent.

"Why, then, if you allow me to write, why do you not answer my communications?"

"Ought I to tell you?"

"Yes, I entreat you, Julia; for if there is not to be candour between us, misery will infallibly supply its place—at least on my part."

"Well, then, to convince you that the fault is not mine, I have been so closely watched day and night, I have no opportunity of putting pen to paper. I am surrounded with spies; and I greatly fear that my mother has intercepted several of your notes. How many have you sent

since I last saw you? and why, if you are really so much attached to me, have you remained so long away?"

"Why, to answer the latter part of the question first, for I very much doubt if it isn't the most important, you see that reporting—"

"Don't mention it to me! Reporting!" with an energy that almost attracted the attention of her mother; "I hate reporting. What has reporting to do with me?"

"Very possibly not," said Dick; and this was an immense admission for him. It was generally supposed by Dick's friends that he believed reporting to influence the whole known habitable globe; and that if he was not found sitting upon the oaken benches of the Exchequer at five minutes to ten every day, in term, to receive the judges on their entrance, some fundamental error would take place in the celestial system, by which England might suddenly be visited by the climate of Muscat, and the Carnatic be perpetually covered by the snows of Spitzbergen. For Dick, therefore, to admit that reporting was no concern to the lady of his love, was as great an admission in its way as—but no matter what—I was going to say something personal, which is improper.

"It's very possible," whispered Doubtful, "that reporting may be nothing to you, and I'm sorry for it. To give up that plea, therefore, and to go to the other matter in issue:—since I last had the pleasure of seeing you, I have written twenty-eight or twenty-nine letters—I won't be exactly sure which."

"And I have received two."

"What, the devil! and has your mother got all the rest?"

Julia said nothing; but gave one of those expressive looks, which even in ancient days must have made Cadmus very much ashamed of his letters.

"Oh, oh!" continued Dick, "that's the way the cat jumps, is it? Here's a pretty kettle of fish, truly. Enter Macbeth kicking his wig!"

What Dick Doubtful meant by this exclamation in the midst of a love dialogue, we hardly feel ourselves called upon to explain. As it really did occur, however, it may be satisfactory for the reader to know that these were a few of Doubtful's little flowers of language, with which he saw fit to grace every subject alike, whether of law, physic, or divinity: to which latter section, of course, a gentleman's mistress most pre-eminently belongs.

Having, therefore, announced the arrival of the murderous Scotch usurper, playing football with his peruke, a circumstance of which Shakspeare has forgotten to inform us, Dick gracefully glided back to a former part of his conversation, by remarking, "If the murder isn't out now, no matter! It really struck me that Lady Periwinkle was very cool in her manner; though the mere fact of her getting five-and-twenty of my letters to you is hardly enough to account for her conduct. Tell me, truly, is there not something else acting upon her mind?"

The rosy colour mantled over Julia's brow as the question was put; and seemingly not daring to look up, she remained silent.

"I could have sworn it," cried Dick—"I could have sworn there was some other cause of anger, '*tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ!*'" All of

which Julia, of course, understood to be a delicate manœuvre on the part of Doubtful to pay her a high compliment which might spare her blushes. "No, do—do tell me what it is that has made her so angry," resumed Dick, who seemed to have a marvellously incompetent idea of a mother's feelings on the crime of love-letters from a poor suitor. And after pressing this question on the reluctant witness once or twice, it was only by his skill in cross-examination that our friend elicited a query in reply, which tended to throw some light on the matter. It was to this effect:—

"Have you not heard of the odious offer that has been repeated until—I shudder at the word—"

"Offer!" cried Doubtful, his cheeks paling to a far more bloodless tint than any to which the pistol of the highwayman had been able to reduce them; "no, I've heard of no offer. By whom—what—when? who has made it?"

The ruby of Julia's lips had already parted to answer this interesting question; but ere anything had proceeded from them, further than a gleam from the prettiest set of teeth imaginable, a sudden blow upon the table, which produced an extensive dance to its accompaniment, and recalled Dick Doubtful to a remembrance of that amiable contest which he had been the means of setting on foot between Sir Job and Lady Periwinkle; and this having reached the climax, it was the heavy hand of the former which emphatically clenched some argument he had laid down.

"If this ungentlemanlike violence is to proceed in my presence, I shall retire," said the lady.

"Madam," returned Sir Job, "it gives me great satisfaction to find that you have so much notion of propriety remaining: it will only be very fortunate for you, if your retirement does not speedily become much more complete and severe than any you at present dream of; and advantages now contemned may be displayed in their real value when too late to be regained."

As Sir Job said this, his eye, whether intentionally or not, glanced towards Dick Doubtful and his daughter; but the imperious dame addressed, answering with a look of as much scorn as she could safely dare to exhibit, swept haughtily from the room, having previously made the most rigid bend to Doubtful, and addressed her daughter with a curt "Miss Periwinkle, lead the way." Sir Job and Doubtful remained sitting alone. Conversation had broken off in the most interesting situation for the former, and the most awkward for the latter. After a pause of some moments, the worthy citizen looked up, saying, "My dear Mr. Doubtful, I've a very important matter on which to consult you; and, therefore, if agreeable, we will adjourn the wine to my study, where we can be uninterrupted."

Doubtful having signified his acquiescence, and the servants having supplied every thing required from them, even to their absence, Sir Job opened his budget.

"You remember, Mr. Doubtful, the melancholy trial of my son—a trial which, I am sorry to say, still leaves me more in doubt than ever as to whether he had been the party guilty of the death of my nephew."

"Of course, Sir Job, I remember all circumstances connected with it."

"Do you also happen to recollect the rascal of an attorney named Costs-in-the-cause?"

"That's the man—that's the scoundrel—but there's another, Taxed-Costs."

"No, it is Costs-in-the-cause of whom I speak; though the other is equally bad, I've no doubt."

"Yes, I think we may pass them over as being one equally bad with the other."

"No doubt, sir, no doubt."

"Well, sir, this rascal had the impudence to come and propose to me, that I should be a party to a conspiracy to defeat the ends of justice, by hiring a mob of armed ruffians to carry off my unfortunate boy Paul from the place of execution."

"Indeed, sir," said Doubtful, with as much gravity as if he had never been consulted again and again on the subject, and as if he had never heard of the imprudent communication which the cupidity and avarice of Taxed-Costs had led him to make to Sir Job, a brief interval before trial.

"Yes, sir," said Sir Job, all the indignation and wrath which Lady Periwinkle had excited finding a free vent at the bare mention of the attorney's name; "that scoundrel had the impudence to make a proposition to *me*, one of the first magistrates in the land—for such I consider the Lord Mayor of London to be—I may almost say a judge. You may imagine, Mr. Doubtful, what I did on that occasion, I did everything but kick the knave down stairs; and verily I must have been forced to do that also, but the door was locked upon me. The only serious difference I ever had with my son Charles, was occasioned by that atrocious villain. However, to make a long story short, this wretched creature has ever since been pestering me for money, making, as the ground of his demand, the covert insinuation that he has to keep in pay a set of rogues, a few degrees less vile than himself, whom he has the audacity to say were useful to my family on a melancholy occasion. A gentleman should have no secrets from his counsel, and I may as well tell you that he alludes to the escape of my son, and his being carried off by a set of smugglers to sea: in this I greatly fear that Charles was implicated, against all my remonstrances. I ought not to speak harshly, for under Heaven's kind providence, that disgraceful scene and violence was the means of saving my poor son's life. God bless him, wherever he may be."

The old gentleman here came to a dead halt; unable to meet Dick Doubtful's eye, his own glance sought the fire-place, but there was no cheerful glance to warrant it in resting there; Sir Job then tried to fix his gaze on the ceiling—on the floor—and then by turns on each object near him; but all would not do; the lids fell slowly over the suffused eye, and drop after drop rolled brightly to the ground. Dick, too, was affected, and, taking the old man's hands between his own, said, in the kind tones of a heart that has been too severely tried itself not to feel for the sufferings of another, "Do not distress yourself, my dear

friend, with these recollections; you forget how near I was, and how cognizant I am of everything that passed: whatever mystery may hang over the fate of Paul, still while life is left, there is room to hope. But to the immediate story, has this designing knave been giving you any fresh trouble?"

"He has, sir, he has," convulsively gasped forth the father, delighted to find in the expressions of genuine anger that vent for the excited feelings which the remembrance of his son's position had called forth. "Unwilling as I naturally ought to be, Mr. Doubtful, that the feelings of my family and self should be any further harassed by having our names again dragged before the public, and the whole details of my son's unfortunate rescue ripped up and submitted to the scrutiny of a Criminal Court, whoever might be the parties implicated in them, I confess that I imprudently, and, in an ill-omened hour, sent to this harpy a draft for such a sum of money as would, I hoped, for ever sweep away all further claims upon him as to this matter: too soon I found out my error; the Vulture had no sooner discovered that, like the fable of the Pelican, I was ready to give my blood for my offspring's life, than on one pretext or another he has set up a perpetual drain, and seems to grow more and more extortionate with every new demand. You may be sure that no little trifle would make me disturb my family's peace by going into such an odious subject; but I have already given him upwards of a thousand pounds, and he now makes a fresh claim upon me for five hundred more, under pain of instantly disclosing all the true facts of the case, and implicating those most dear to me. The villain has even had the audacity to come down to Kingston, and limits this night as the last of his forbearance, when, if I don't send him an answer signifying my acquiescence in his extortion, his threats are to be put in force. Now, I wish to take your opinion as to what course I had better pursue, or shall I endeavour to find out whether we can safely and certainly fix a practical limit to that which is, after all—I blush when I say it—mere 'hush money?'"

We hope we need hardly inform our readers, that if there had been only one man in the world with whom it would have been dangerous to advise on such an occasion, Dick Doubtful was that man: nay, even more, if it had been desirable to consult a gentleman—most certain to lead him into an irretrievable scrape—that man was Dick Doubtful.

The learning acquired apart from the fierce contests of mankind invigorates, adorns, and elevates the mind, but it is of a kind the least likely to be useful in those sudden emergencies which a rough contact with the various rogueries of our nature quickens into life—such a learning was it that marked our legal friend; but thought with him was the decision of a philosopher, attained by careful consideration of all the evidence, not the combination of a general, with whom reason and feeling are equally rapid, and often identical. When Sir Job, therefore, had stated his case to Dick, the latter drew a long breath, put his head on one side, shrugged his shoulders convulsively, and then brought out that profound remark with which he generally enlightened all seekers of his opinion.

"'Pon my word this is a very delicate case, Sir Job, a very delicate case. You see there are so many points to be considered," and thus he went on dividing his attention into useless channels, starting objections only to answer them, splitting the subject into innumerable divisions only to reunite them into one inextricable whole of confusion, until at last poor Sir Job Periwinkle saw himself surrounded by every horror under the sun, without the slightest chance of being able to avoid one of them; and when this happy point had been arrived at, and the clock happening to strike one in the morning, Sir Job ventured finally to ask what Dick's opinion really was: that dark lantern of the Exchequer gravely made answer, that the case submitted to him was of so delicate, intricate, and important a nature, that he could not undertake to give any opinion at all until he had slept upon it.

"But," said Sir Job, in great dismay, "the man must have his answer to-night; this is the last hour that I am allowed to act, and if I do not take some step to quiet him before to-morrow morning, it will then be too late to do so. If," said the innocent Sir Job in his simplicity, "you think that you'll be able to think clearer after a little sleep, lay down on that sofa—take a nap for an hour—I'll take up a book in the mean while, and call you at the end of it."

"Why, thank you," said Doubtful, "it is not that exactly; when I said I'd sleep on the matter, I merely meant I should like to have time: as to sleep, I'm so tired, I dare say I shall not be able to go to sleep even when I retire: questions of this difficult nature always take time."

"But that's just what we can't afford to give them."

"Oh yes, Sir Job, Costs has merely threatened; but depend upon it, he will be just as ready to be bought to-morrow as he is to-day:" and with arguments of this nature, Dick at last prevailed upon Sir Job to allow him, as he said, to sleep on it: a measure which has proved to be fortunate in one case, and to be fatal in fifty. Accordingly, with this determination, the hospitable host lighted his guest to his room, and retiring to his own, they met on the next morning at the breakfast table. After the usual salutation and inquiries, Sir Job's first question was, whether Doubtful had come to any decision on the case last night submitted to him.

"'Pon my word," said Dick, with the usual shrug, "the more I look into this matter, the more convinced I am that this is a very delicate question, very!—You see—"

Sir Job's countenance fell in a moment, which, Doubtful observing, he exclaimed by way of parenthesis, "not but that I have come to a decision on the subject, that is, I think—" What Dick thought was most unfortunately cut short by the entrance of the servant with two letters on a salver, which he presented to Sir Job.

"Ah!" said the latter, seizing them eagerly; and as he did so, his countenance changed colour:—"here's good and bad news, I suppose. Here's a letter from that rascal Costs, and one from my son Charles; —'tis kind of him to have been so quick in answering those questions I have put to him, but I suppose he sees it's a matter of immediate mo-

ment;—let's have the bad news first. I'll open Costs' letter to begin with."—A deadly paleness overspread the features of Sir Job as he perused this document, and, laying it quietly down before Doubtful, he observed with a sigh, "these are the usual effects of indecision." On hearing this, the other snatched it up immediately, and read as follows:—

"Sir,—As you have not thought fit to follow my proposition, I feel that it is my duty to lay before Government the share which you took in the riot which defeated the execution of your son.

"I am, your's, for self and brother, C. Costs."

"What the devil his brother has to do with it, I can't make out," said Dick, as if it was a mere matter of no moment.

"But do you see, Mr. Doubtful," replied Sir Job, nettled at his nonchalance, "that the whole affair will now be raked up again—that the whole object for which I have been labouring and flinging large sums of money into the gutter"—

"Never mind—never mind," said Dick, coolly; "since it has come to this, we must make the best fight we can of it."

"Never mind, sir!" echoed Sir Job, in a complete passion, "is this a time or a matter to say never mind to?" But here he contrived to check the anger that was so nigh past mastering; and turning his eyes to the other letter from his son, he there found in the postmark matter sufficient to withdraw his attention from everything besides.

"Falmouth!—what can have taken him down to Falmouth?—and the letter a week old—it is very extraordinary." But if he had been moved by the preceding epistle, his emotion, on the breaking the seal of this last epistle, increased tenfold; he held it in his hands for a few seconds, as if doubting the reality of its intelligence, and then laying it down beside him, remarked with a deep sigh, "Misfortunes never come single."

Doubtful, anxious to atone for any pain which his carelessness had occasioned, inquired into the cause of the expression, and in reply received the intelligence that Charles, finding at every turn in his profession the prejudice against him, on account of the trial and conviction of his brother, had determined, at least for a while, to withdraw from the sphere of its influence, and fearing his father's opposition, had privately accepted the appointment of attorney-general to the island of Jamaica, for which he had sailed ten or twelve days since, and had given that letter to a friend to place it for him in the post. At this emergency Sir Job naturally felt that the adviser on whom he had the strongest right to rely, was withdrawn from him at a period when he most desired his assistance. While yet mourning over this double complication of annoyances, Lady Periwinkle took the happy moment of observing—

"I am sure, Sir Job, you cannot want either counsel or advice when you have at your elbow that of Mr. Doubtful, who has so ably advised you in the matter of Costs the attorney." This was said with that air of triumph which female antagonists have, before now, been known to put on, at a time when triumph and ridicule could be least endured. The shaft, as it was intended, penetrated deep into Doubtful's soul,

and he mentally vowed to take some opportunity of paying her off in her own coin. There was also a more praiseworthy resolution which he made, and as soon as he rose from the table, this he put into execution, of riding, namely, into Kingston, and seeing Costs, and using his best endeavours to defeat the machinations of that cool traitor.

Sir Job received the proposition with many thanks, but little hope that it would be conducive to any benefit. He felt that a heavy blow was about to fall on him; and he considered himself in the position of the disarmed Hector when about to fall beneath the stroke of Achilles, since the son, who would have been shield and spear, and armour too, was unfortunately absent from his side, at the moment when it most needed to be invulnerable. However, Doubtful's going into Kingston to see Costs could be productive of no harm, and might elicit some good—and so he set out.

"Well," muttered Dick to himself, as Combermere was once more brought from the stable, and Dick, in thirty thousand agonies of stiffened limbs, at last placed himself once more in the saddle. *L'homme propose, mais Dieu dispose;*" and, taking his nag with a wary bridle, off he started. The refreshment of the morning air, the brilliancy of the sun, and the beauty of the scenery in that neighbourhood, which is most exquisite — the noble object of the majestic Thames winding from shore to shore, amidst every variety of shaded nook and peopled hamlet, town, and villa,—all contributed to swell Doubtful's breast with emotions of delight; and wrapped in delicious reveries, he forgot his aching bones and Lady Periwinkle's severity, thought no more of Costs than he did of the Cader Idris, and drowned the sorrows of Sir Job in the brilliant ripples of the neighbouring stream. In this state of absence he had ridden some three miles, at which distance from Hawarden Hall the road bends down towards the water, and at the spot nearest where it approaches the banks, a vista opening through the trees affords a long continued glance across one of the loveliest reaches of the Thames: from this point the road again rises, while on the other side a high hedge divides it from a common. As Doubtful was about descending into this little valley, he thought he observed two strange-looking horsemen rising upon the crown of the hill on the other side; it being daylight, however, and having no further fear of such an escort as last night had waited upon his heels, he took no further notice of the matter. The water shallowed at the bank, where a pure bright gravel left it undefiled, and Combermere exhibiting an inclination to take a draught, Doubtful allowed him this indulgence, while he himself remained gazing on the prospect: thus absorbed, the noise of approaching hoofs passed unheeded; the two strange-looking horsemen trotted briskly down to the opening near the river, and one spurring his horse up on each side of Dick, they laid their unceremonious hands upon his collar, with a shout of—"Damn you, you old villain, we've got you at last."

"Well, gentlemen," said Dick, turning round, exceedingly startled, as he lawfully might be, and surveying one fellow with his nose broken and patched, and the other with a fearful contusion on his ear and eye,

and his face covered with scars of very recent infliction—"well, gentlemen, as there are two of you, all resistance is useless; I'm only sorry you're guilty of such a crime for so small an inducement;—you'll find very little in my purse to reward you for this deed: however, since you're determined to rob me of it, you had better take it at once, and let me go about my business."

"Let you go about your business, you rascal, none of your gammon; that bam won't do, you know: don't you think that we're quite so green as you take us to be. Take your hands out of your pocket, I say, we know your tricks. Handcuff 'un Bill, while I hold'en fast: most likely he's got a pair of cracks in that pocket."

"Cracks, gentlemen! what do you mean?"

"What do we mean? you never heard pistols called cracks before. Oh, no—of course—certainly not—we won't trust you, though, for all that. Bill, have you got them irons ready?"

"Yes; here they be."

"Well, then, whip 'em on at once, before we have any further bother."

There was something in the voices of these two ruffians that sounded very familiar to Dick's ear; and having surveyed their battered countenances and jaded horses, both of which appeared to have been greatly over-ridden, and each to have had a fall in its turn—one having a wounded shoulder and nose, besides a broken knee, the other, a broken knee only—one part of the truth at least flashed upon his mind. "Pray," said he, very politely, to the one who seemed to be leader, "may I ask if you are not the—the"—here Dick seemed at a considerable loss for a word; for a moment he felt inclined to supply the omission with such an expression as "the rascally thieves who nearly broke my neck last night;" but the uninviting, not to say impudent, nature of this interrogatory, made him change its phraseology into the very accommodating phrase of, "pray, may I ask if you were not my fellow-travellers of last night?" and Dick indulged in a smile of very great meaning.

"His—his—his—fellow-travellers!" said the fellow, returning the grin with ample interest. "Do you hear that, Bill? His fellow-travellers—that's not so worser, is it?" Then turning to Dick, "Yes, my covey, we were your fellow-travellers last night, and you'll be ours this morning, I can tell you. But, for fear you should catch cold, you must put on this pair of comforters," producing the irons.

"Those!" said Doubtful, starting back with so much horror, that he nearly lost his seat. "What, in the name of Heaven, do you take me for?"

"Why a horse-stealer, of course; do you think you arn't well enough known by this time? Why, what the devil did you think we was?"

"Highwaymen!" gasped Dick.

"Well, d— your impudence! do you mean for to say that you're going for to try to make us believe that you took us for highwaymen last night, when we kept bawling to you to surrender in the king's name?"

"It's false," said Dick; "I never heard you use the king's name, I heard you bawl out something about surrender, or I'll blow your brains out before you get to Kingston."

"Come, come,—that won't do; we know you're an old hand at the trick; 'tisn't as if this was the first horse you ever helped your neighbours to get rid of; you know very well, you've been in trouble on account of horseflesh before now; it's a little liking you've a got, you know, so it's no use denying it."

"Upon my honour, I protest—"

"Oh, it's no use your protesting here, we've had your description in our office years agone; I dare say there's half-a-dozen charges to come out against you yet, more than we've a got."

"But, on my honour, gentlemen, I assure you you're mistaken."

"Oh, gammon! your honour—we know there's no more mistake about you, than there is about our being gentlemen. Mr. Smith, alias Brown, alias Thompson, alias Dyas—I suppose you've got another name by this time to the boot of all."

"Dyas! gentlemen, I assure you, my name's not Dyas but Doubtful."

"Ah! ah! Bill, didn't I tell you so," said the other, when both of them burst out into a boisterous laugh. "Doubtful! I believe you are Doubtful, and d—d Doubtful, too! I never met with such a precious hypocrite in all my life. Now this morning, by daylight, you pretend you're such a bad rider, as to be scarcely able to sit your horse, reeling to and fro, catching hold of the pummel, and pretending you've got no seat on your saddle; and there was you last night, when you wanted to escape, going like the very wind—down hill and up 'twas all the same—sticking to that unfortunate creature's back, as if you grew out of her flesh; knocking Bill down to the ground as easily as if he had been on the top of a Shetland pony, and leading me such an infernal pace over Kingston-hill, as nearly broke my neck and the horse's also."

"Upon my honour, gentlemen, I took you for highwaymen."

"Highwaymen!" said Bill, here interfering in the dialogue.

"Why," said Dick, stung to exceeding wrath, "you certainly look more like two than one, for the matter of that—a pair of more atrocious looking scoundrels I never beheld."

"Ay, my covey, now you're coming out," replied the man, whose good-humour returned as Dick's departed; "we shall hear something spicy now, I'll warrant."

"Well, all I can say is, that you're a brace of most accursed fools, or still worse, knaves; if you persist in perpetrating this absurd blunder, you shall bitterly repent it."

"Ay, my lad, so we suppose; but unfortunately, you see, you're not quite the boy to preach repentance, for you never tried it yourself—so, come along;" and having placed the unfortunate Doubtful's hands in the handcuffs, which Mr. Bill had produced from his pocket, they placed themselves one on each side of his horse, and set off at a gentle trot towards Kingston.

"But," said Doubtful, making one further effort at remonstrance,

"are you determined upon getting yourselves into this scrape? I tell you, my name is Richard Doubtful; I am a Barrister of Gray's Inn."

"Ay, ay," interrupted the thief-taker, "I've no doubt you are; I believe, too, you've been a Colonel in the army, a Rector of Diddle-come-Diddle, a Captain of his Majesty's ship Dreadnought, Bishop of the Isle of Dogs, and half-a-dozen other great people."

"You are either a most atrocious scoundrel, or a most infernal fool," said Dick, losing his temper, and getting into a rage for him altogether unprecedented. "What, in the name of fortune, is the use of getting into this scrape, and depriving an innocent gentleman of his liberty from sheer wilfulness?"

"Innocent! you looks like an innocent gentleman!"

"Well, if you don't believe me, just ride back a little way to Hawarden Hall, the seat of Sir Job Periwinkle; I have just come from his house, and he'll tell you who and what I am."

"Oh, no doubt! we have a great respect for Sir Job Periwinkle, and we hope his health is good, but we're not going to fall into that trap, I can tell you: how do we know that, before we get a hundred yards, we mayn't fall in with some of your pals, and not only have our brains knocked out, but find ourselves taken prisoners into the bargain. No, no; we have you very safe, and we intend to keep you so, until we get to Bow-street, where you may make the best of your own story."

"Very well," said Dick—"very well. I can tell you, you will find this very much to your cost. But remember, I protest to you, that you're mistaken, and that I am wholly innocent of any such charge as that you impute."

"Ay, ay! we couldn't well mistake that, seeing that you make it every other time you open your mouth; but it won't do, so you may as well give it up."

"Very well—very well: we shall see, at the last, if you do not regret this outrageous conduct. Pray what, may I ask, is the particular offence of which you accuse me."

"Oh! now! come! do not try to make yourself so precious innocent as that, you really will make me laugh."

"I insist, I say, upon knowing, sir."

"Very well; if you will make me inform you of what you have been about, I must make bold to tell you, that you stole that horse you are riding on."

"This horse!"

"Aye, that horse, isn't that English?"

"Oh! 'pon my word, this is too ridiculous."

"Aye, so I suppose; you looked the creature in the face, and it followed you directly, didn't it?"

"As you like, gentlemen—as you like," said Dick, who now really was amused; "'tis right you should enjoy yourselves now, for you'll have to pay very dearly for your amusement, I assure you: however, that you may have no excuse for your conduct, I now inform you, that

this horse is the property of Lieutenant-Colonel Sprightly, of the Bombay army, who has lent it to me as long as I choose to retain it."

"Oh! he has, has he? A very accommodating gentleman, isn't he, Bill? 'Tis well we know where to look for a friend when we want one; but, unfortunately for you, young man, that horse, as you call it, was never Colonel Sprightly's to lend, for it belongs to one Squire Higginbottom, as you must very well know, seeing you stole it, only yesterday afternoon, from the ostler of the Three Bells Livery-stables."

"Oh! come, if that's all, the ostler himself will soon disabuse you of your error. What the name of the tavern may be I don't know, but I'll direct you where to find it, and I beg that he may be sent for as soon as we get to town."

"Don't be alarmed, sir, you'll find him waiting in Bow-street, and very glad to see you in such good health."

"Very good," said Doubtful—"very good; and this ridiculous mistake will soon be set to rights: though how it can have arisen, appears to me a most mysterious affair."

"Come, come, now, do let us have no more of your gammon: I'm tired of hearing such a heap of lies told for no sort of manner of use. Do you think because you went to a better school, when you were a boy, than Bill or I, that we're going to be taken in by your rubbish? Ride on, and hold your slack, will you?"

"Very well—very well: have it as you like. I must say, the society is not very inviting for discussion;" and, with a sigh of vexation at the awkward prank which Fortune had played him, Doubtful resigned himself to his fate; and, filled with conjectures as to the origin of this ridiculous and annoying charge, the elegant trio jogged slowly forward into Kingston. Here the erudite reporter of the Legal Oracle had the supreme satisfaction of finding himself the "observed of all observers;" and an escort, most considerately formed of all the tag-rag of the place, escorted him till placed in a post-chaise, in which, between his two friendly guards, he was conducted in triumph to the metropolis.

It is now time that we return to our friend, Colonel Sprightly, in order that we may account for his uncourteous absence from home on that day, when he had specially requested his old collegian to partake of the Indian curry, &c.

Dick Sprightly was a bachelor, and if there are any privileges belonging to that estate, or rather usurped by it, which some people are ill-natured enough to assert, it must be confessed that Colonel Sprightly was the last man in the world to let them remain in any state of abeyance. After a brief and fortunate service in India, he had returned home in the very flower of manhood, with a mind naturally prone to excess, and not very well fitted by his education to restrain it. He had fitted up the place, which he had called Neilgherry Lodge, after the most approved fashion of Eastern luxury and magnificence. He was also a great admirer of beauty in every guise and shape; and though he had never possessed sufficient courage of mind to remain so constant

to one affection as to unite himself to its object, he was still sufficiently fond of female beauty to select, and not with the best care, a young and very pretty lady for his housekeeper—it is to be feared, also, that her face was the only part of her character on which he had bestowed any attention; but the reader can judge of this for himself: suffice it to say, that, on the day in question, after Sprightly had parted from Doubtful, the former passed in the park a beautiful woman, very elegantly attired, and accompanied by two dogs. There was something about her air and manner that attracted Sprightly's attention; and, having tracked her into Kensington Gardens, he rode hastily away to a livery-stable in Kensington, where he kept a relay of horses, got rid of the inconvenience of his steed, and, entering the gardens on foot, determined to follow up his adventure with the lady of the dogs; but, however fond of the canine species, his innamorata intimated by her conduct that she did not require a third puppy in her train; and having gone there, in all probability, to meet some more favoured suitor, she was very anxious to get rid of the colonel's attentions. The colonel, like some other determined suitors, was very anxious not to be got rid of; and it ended by the lady appealing to one of the keepers of the garden, who making use of rather opprobrious language, the colonel, with Eastern impetuosity, knocked him down, and was for the same incontinently carried to a police-office. Having been for a proportionate time locked up in a cell with all the drunken and profligate individuals of that neighbourhood, he was at last brought before the magistrate, who perceiving how the case went, and aware that no fine would amount to one tithe of the punishment that the simplest exposure of the offender's real rank would prove, desired, as the first preliminary, to be informed of the colonel's name.

"O'Riley," said our gallant friend, giving one of his Christian appellations, and thereby hoping to escape all further torture.

"Very well," said the magistrate; "now give me your residence, and tell me what you are."

But the colonel, wisely knowing that at the spur of the moment he might give some account of himself, which it might be in the magistrate's power to prove incorrect, he, in his ignorance, adopted the equally inconvenient course of declining to make any further statement whatever.

"What," said the Midas, "do you decline giving any description of yourself?"

"Yes, I do," returned the colonel.

"Then, sir, I shall commit you as a vagrant."

"You have no right to do that," said Sprightly. "I committed an assault, and the man deserved the chastisement he got; proceed then to fine me for it, but you've no right to commit me as a vagrant."

This was fatal: had he broached any other monstrosity under the sun, it might have mattered little; but to question the *power* of a magistrate was a species of high treason, which no aristocracy of person or appearance could purge, in addition to which the colonel was unfortunately wrong.

"Hav'n't I power, fellow?" said the magistrate, becoming as cul-

pable in his turn as Sprightly was at first; "I'll very soon show you whether I hav'n't power in this matter. If you don't immediately give some description of yourself, as to your abode and calling, that I may judge whether I ought to fine or hold you to bail, I shall immediately commit you as a vagrant to the House of Correction."

"Whatever you do, sir," said the colonel, "I warn you, it will be at your peril. I've given you my name, and I shall say no more about myself: any penalty you may choose to inflict I shall immediately discharge by payment."

"Fellow, you're committed as a vagrant! Call on another case." And the haughty colonel suddenly found himself given up to the myrmidons of the law, pulled *vi et armis* out of the office, once more locked up, and in the course of an hour driven off, with sundry other delinquents, to that very questionable abode, the House of Correction. "Truly, this is agreeable," mumbled the colonel as he looked round him; "they call this a land of rational liberty, where, because a man mayn't choose to have his name made a subject of comment to a vulgar crowd, he is to be treated like a common vagabond: however, it's the fortune of war, and I suppose I must submit; but if I can trounce that jack in office for it, he may take his oath that I will. However, anything is better than having one's name stuck in the papers, and all the fellows in one's coterie furnished with a subject for quizzing for the next month. All that can be done now, is quietly to get my solicitor to-morrow, and consult with him. Thank Heaven, money is no object to me; and I suppose it will be the old story, by which, as usual in England, anything may be had for paying for it; even one's liberty. I'll send off quietly for my solicitor, and at most, I suppose, I shall get out to-morrow."

It was very pleasant to indulge in these anticipations, more especially as the issue somewhat differed from them. Having arrived at the House of Correction, all the delinquents were shown into a separate ward. A couple of barbers made their appearance, together with some other tormentors of the establishment, and the governor of the building; Colonel Sprightly was then informed, to his bitter consternation, that he must be cleaned, and washed, and dressed in the workhouse uniform—having previously had the satisfaction of getting his hair cut close at the county's expense: after which he would be allowed to make up for the expenditure, by picking oakum for the county's consumption. The ludicrous expression of horror and dismay, which this intelligence called forth on the dandyfied colonel's face, was rich beyond all portraiture; he begged—he protested—he prayed—he assured—he did all that a man under such adverse circumstances could do, but in vain. All present, even the rogues who shared his commitment, seemed to enjoy his distress with a savage vulgarity, and there appeared no hope near in time of need. At last, however, he recollected himself sufficiently to take the governor aside, and inform him that he expected his solicitor there, to get him out, and that, if he would consent to a postponement of the inaugural ceremonies hereinbefore described, he, Colonel Sprightly, would give him a guinea.

"A guinea?" said the governor, with a most incorruptible sneer; "What's your guinea to me, sir?"

"I beg your pardon," returned Sprightly, "I meant to say five."

"Your case does seem rather hard," quickly added the governor, on hearing this last amendment. "You say you have a solicitor?"

"Oh yes! a very eminent one, a Mr. Factor, of the firm of Factor and Fee-'em-well, of Lincoln's Inn-fields; he'd come to me directly, and I am sure, through him, I should get out to-morrow morning."

"Well, then, stay a moment; I'll just speak to Hutchings, who brought you here." Accordingly the incorruptible governor spoke to the incorruptible Hutchings, and, from the answer of the latter, ascertained that this was a case in which the cleaning, washing, and dressing, and, above all, the close hair-cutting, would be particularly acceptable, and indeed indispensable, to the satisfaction of the sitting magistrate; and that if the prisoner escaped these operations in consequence of the governor's overstepping his authority, it was far from improbable that the said governor might, in consequence, no longer possess any authority to overstep. Still, to prevent the annoyance of the colonel's bribe being missed, it was agreed by these high-minded men that the colonel, upon the payment of the five guineas, should be remitted his tortures until the ensuing morning; when, if the attorney did not appear, the whole machinery of the workhouse should be put into operation, as in that case made and provided; while Hutchings, for his consent and advice in this matter, was to be allowed to charge two guineas for taking the prisoner's letter to the attorney: and in order that the sitting magistrate's spite might be, nevertheless, gratified, the letter to the attorney was by no means to be delivered till the afternoon of the following day; by which ingenious process, the attorney not arriving in the morning, the prisoner might by the governor, with all show of justice, be duly cleaned, shaved, dressed, and clipped as aforesaid. Accordingly, this very candid and honourable transaction was by the confederates carried into execution; the governor graciously consented to receive the five guineas on the conditions stipulated, while Hutchings kindly undertook to carry the note, which Colonel Sprightly wrote, for the consideration of two pounds two. The letter having been accordingly written was delivered to the tender mercies of the aforesaid Hutchings, with whom the incorruptible governor withdrew, in order that his curiosity might be gratified by knowing all that related to his prisoner; accordingly, having carefully removed the damp wafer with which the note was closed, *pro forma*, the worthy pair read the following lines:—"One of your oldest clients has immediate need of your assistance. Come to me on the instant that you receive this." This mysterious communication, being duly dated from the very corrective spot that had so admirably corrected the bad propensities of its own governor, was duly pocketed by Hutchings, together with a brace of those inviting guineas which Sprightly had earned under a much warmer sun, and a still more corrupt administration. This trusty messenger having departed, Colonel Sprightly requested to know if he could not be accommodated with a private room,

which, on the moderate condition of converting the governor's five guineas into ten, was also generously accorded to him.

Here, then, our eastern friend had the satisfaction of passing the first night ever by him devoted to any correcting impulses. Confident that the respectable solicitor whom he had summoned would be in attendance very speedily, he ordered a most excellent breakfast, to which we must admit he did full justice; and when, at eight o'clock, the governor entered his room, he concluded, as a matter of course, that he came to announce the attendance of Mr. Factor; however, a somewhat different purpose engaged the mind of the governor, and he thus delivered himself:—

"I'm very sorry, sir, that your friend, the lawyer, aint come; however, in this world, as you know, we must all do our duty; it is already an hour past the time when I set the prisoners to their work, and they have been walking into the oakum ever since eight o'clock; you have behaved like a gentleman to me, sir, and as such I shall always respect you, but if I make any out-and-out distinction among the men, some of them will lodge a complaint against me with the magistrates, and I shall lose my bread."

"What's the matter?" said Colonel Sprightly, beginning to be somewhat alarmed.

"Why, sir, as this attorney of yours doesn't come, I'm afraid I must subject you to the usual prison rules of dressing, shaving, &c."

"But, my good fellow, you haven't given him time to come, yet."

"Lord love you, sir! yes, I have; if he ever intended to show at all, he would have come by this time—those people know our customs as well as if they'd lived here all their lives."

"But this isn't one of your prison attorneys—He stands among the first solicitors in London; a man who has nothing to do with criminal cases: he's only engaged in civil practice."

"All's one for that, sir; take my word, he knows as much about the matter as ever you can teach him, so don't trouble yourself. I know what these fellows are very well. They're all up to what goes on in every prison in London. But the real truth of the matter is this, if they aint quite cock-sure who their client is, they always think it some hoax; but perhaps you took the precaution of signing your real name to your lawyer, although you would not give it before the magistrate."

To this wily observation thus thrown out, the unhappy Sprightly made no reply, for, as the governor argued, his mind was filled with doubt, lest, some suspicion of the kind mentioned really entering into the conception of his attorney, the latter might be prevented from giving that assistance so essential to him. Vainly in answer to the governor's assertions respecting the necessity of doing his duty, did Sprightly, relying on his former generosity, ask for the indulgence of another hour. He then had recourse to his old friend, the purse; but like most men who have bankers, he never carried any money with him, and now therefore found his stock diminished to a solitary guinea. The idea of this melan-

choly coin purchasing another hour, was by the governor held in the most virtuous abhorrence; till finding in his despair that he must be content with an instalment of his desires, he turned round upon the governor, saying, "Since you make such a fuss about the necessity of doing your duty, I'm sure I don't want to stand in your way; I've not the least objection to being shaved; since I agree with you, it would be highly beneficial. As to washing, you may champoo me if you like; but do not, I implore you, begin your process of cutting close my unfortunate hair for at least another hour. Give my attorney till then. The note may have miscarried, or he may have been busy, or a thousand accidents may have occurred; and for this extra indulgence, here's the last piece of gold I have in the prison."

"Well, to oblige you, sir," said the governor, pocketing the guinea, which at the first blush of the question might have been thought to shift the obligation upon other shoulders, "to oblige you, sir, I'll step so far out of my way, though I assure you I run a very great risk by it. So, that point being settled, perhaps you'll walk into the ward and have your dress shifted; and then you may just make sham to pick a bit of oakum with the rest, and the overseer won't take notice if you're a little slack or so."

"Oh gods! ye gods! must I endure all this?" muttered the gay colonel, as the idea of being obliged to become an oakum-picker recurred to his gallant mind. However, we must say this for him: as soon as he had satisfied himself that the day would not go in his favour, he submitted to his hard destiny with all the grace in his power, ruthlessly exposed his chin to the parish barber, donned the rude vest, and seated himself on his hams to disentangle rope-yarn, with as bold a front and as resigned a manner as if he had been born to no other employment. "At any rate," muttered he, "this is better than seeing my name in the papers; and surely if a man can find so much consolation in his own obstinacy, that quality is not so great a vice as some people have pronounced it."

The acmé of Sprightly's trials, however, had not yet arrived; the dearly-bought hour of grace and favour had elapsed—another had succeeded it—and the colonel was in full hopes that his worst fears might be averted. Colonel Sprightly had one source of peculiar pride about him—it was his hair! Of a beautiful glossy black, he daily devoted to it half-an-hour of his time on each day, during the last twenty years of his life; through sickness, sorrow, and privation, through all the perils of war and vicissitudes of climate, this head of hair had been the rallying point of hope; whatever happened to him, that had always been the primary object of his solicitude; whatever he had suffered, that had never been neglected; to have brought it home untouched by grey from the burning suns of India was, he conceived, a sufficient object of pride to endure through the life-time of any man; no one could be more thoroughly alive to the conspicuous object of beauty which it formed on his person; the bare idea, therefore, of having it cut off in the House of Correction, of having it cut close by the prison barber, who would value it no more than that of any other vagrant, was in itself a matter

of such deep chagrin, that he could barely bring himself to contemplate such desecration. While yet, therefore, he was indulging in the hope that it might have been forgotton, up stepped the governor, who in the utmost joy at witnessing such a scene, and with his vile familiar at his heels, began what he called his duty. Of course every prisoner in the place was gathered round to behold the interesting operation. Every attempt at persuasion, every promise of a future bribe, every effort that despair could make, was in vain tried by the colonel to avert the dreaded consummation. Sprightly, seeing that recourse would be had to force if necessary, quietly resigned himself to the surrounding demons, and in a few minutes those locks, which had been his delight for years, as well as the admiration of the peerless and high-born beauties of various countries, lay soiled and severed on the filthy floor of a House of Correction! When the deed was done, the colonel fairly gave himself up to despair; he would change and discharge his solicitor; he would expose the rascally governor; in short, there was no end to the unlimited revenge he would take in every direction. He scarcely thought of poor Dick Doubtful riding down to have a *tête-à-tête* dinner with him on an eastern curry; nor did he reflect on the scene of confusion to which his absence from home would give rise. The groom from whom he had taken his horse to mount Doubtful in Parliament-street, had, in his way back to Neilgherry Lodge, called at the stables in Kensington, where his master always kept some of his horses, intending to take therefrom one on which he himself might ride down. Here he was informed that the colonel had put up his steed for an hour, and would in that time return. The groom waited the hour; and when that and the succeeding one elapsed without Colonel Sprightly making his appearance, he rode home, fully persuaded that some freak had taken his master out of the way; and that when the whim had terminated, he would present himself at Neilgherry Lodge, however late the hour might be. In the morning, when the servant found his master still absent, he became somewhat alarmed at a circumstance so unusual; and riding back to town, and finding the horse still at the stable where his master had put it, and yet being able to obtain no tidings of the colonel, alarm deepened into certainty, and he spent the day in going round the West end of London, and indirectly endeavouring to find out whether the colonel was staying at any friend's house. In the mean time the young and pretty housekeeper, seeing this was a moment of doubt and confusion, took that opportunity of giving the cook two days' holiday to see some relations who lived in Kent, while she and the housemaid, who had been chosen by herself, kindly relieved the colonel of the greater part of his family plate, which she took off in a glass-coach, considerately locking the door, lest either the colonel or his servant might return to get in. A few hours after these events, when Doubtful had the delight of arriving, he, of course, found the house swept and empty; while far off, amid the miseries of the House of Correction, the gallant colonel mourned the loss of those hyacinthine locks divine, which it must take him some months, even if ever they could be restored to their former beauty.

About three hours after the completion of the dreadful deed which

Sprightly had striven so hard to prevent, in walked that most respectable attorney, Mr. Factor. He had never received the letter till that morning; and, besides the delay on the part of the worthy Hutchings, he had himself been out of town when it arrived. The deep grief, however, which he expressed, at once convinced the governor that they had been playing their pranks on a man of station and fortune; and struck with compunction at his daring, he certainly now atoned for it as far as in him lay, by forwarding the views of both parties.

Mr. Factor having heard the state of the case, informed his client that there was only one way of getting out of the affair; the good old plan, namely — paying through thick and thin. The colonel had explained quite enough of the House of Correction, and gladly consented to take any steps that could forward his release. Thus authorised, the attorney procured an interview with the magistrate's-clerk; and the affair was then arranged: the clerk, having received twenty pounds, kindly acted as plenipotentiary in the matter; and procured to Sprightly the favour of being permitted to pay thirty pounds more for his release, to what was facetiously termed a public charity—of course that public charity did not mean the magistrate's pocket by any means—of course not! However, this being resolved, Sprightly was to make his appearance at the office once more, be again called upon to give his name, and having again given the name he had already promulgated, together with any address on which he chose to fix, no further questions were to be asked, and no officer to be sent to ascertain whether the address given were the right one; after which, having received a lecture from the bench, he was to depart, promising never again to do so no more, &c. Shall we not, then, admit that this was as edifying a process of impartial justice as could be found anywhere out of the dominions of the great Cham of Tartary?

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## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

### A COUNTRY MAGISTRATE.

While the unfortunate Doubtful was in the act of being placed in a post-chaise at Kingston, he heard one of the bystanders demand of his guards, whether they had got an old offender; to which the answer made was, "Oh, ay, a regular desperate 'un; an old hand on this road as has been known for years—that is, off and on."

If Dick had gone the home-circuit instead of the northern, this would have been very intelligible. In the present case, however, the assertion was chiefly valuable, as tending to illustrate the great knowledge and modesty of the constabulary.

When once they had succeeded in getting this desperate character into the post-chaise, they courageously ventured to take off the handcuffs with which they had previously guarded against any surprise on

Dick's part; and one of the men having alighted on Wimbledon Common, close to the spot where Dick had first encountered what he considered the highwaymen, the other escorted him to the police-office in London.

On the moment of Doubtful's arrival, he very prudently sent a messenger with a list of three friends, all of them barristers, but unfortunately they were all from home, and the unfortunate prisoner had to make the best of the fight by himself. Doubtful, having announced his name and station to the magistrate, received the comforting information that he was no respecter of persons; that he should act upon the evidence alone.

"I'm very glad of it, sir," said Doubtful, "it is the proper course, and will at once throw this silly charge to the ground."

"I hope so, sir; I hope so; however silly the charge may appear to you, I consider it a very serious one; which, if you are the person you pretend to be, you must know as well as I do."

"Exactly, sir, and therefore I should be obliged by your postponing this examination for a few hours, that I may have time to communicate with my friends, and call the witnesses by whom I intend to prove my defence."

"Sir, I've told you I'm no respecter of persons; were John Jenkins or Thomas Johnson accused before me, I should not think of granting such indulgence to them, and I cannot to you; innocence, sir, doesn't require the making up of a defence; it appears at once. Besides, sir, you're not upon your trial now; this is a mere preliminary inquiry."

"Which, if it ends in my committal," interrupted Dick, with great truth, "will as completely blast my character as anything can be well desired to do."

"I can't help that; parties should be more cautious in what they're about;" and with these, and equally reasonable dogmas, this light of justice proceeded. The first witness called was the ostler, who proved that on the day on which the horse was stolen Dick had come and desired him to saddle the animal in question, which he had since seen in the possession of the police, and which he was able to identify as the same horse which Dick had taken away, and he had saddled at his request;—that at the time in question, observing something very suspicious in Doubtful's manner, he had asked him to give his name, which he had at first declined to do, and ultimately gave that of Colonel Sprightly; that he at first shammed not to know anything about a horse, and pretended to get up on the wrong side; that he, the ostler, thinking there was something suspicious in his manner, had gone to his master, and his master had said—

"Stop, stop," said Dick, "that's not evidence."

"What, sir?" said the magistrate, who appeared scarcely to know the meaning of the word.

"Why," said Doubtful, "he was going to repeat what his master said—that's not evidence against me."

"But I say, sir, it *shall* be evidence," replied the magistrate.

"What!" said Dick, perfectly aghast; "can you alter the laws of

the land, and make that evidence which was never received as such in any court of justice?"

"Don't talk to me in that way, fellow; what do you know about evidence?"

"Why," said Dick, "considering I'm a barrister, and the laws of evidence form a very material point let me tell you in my profession, I think I ought to know something about it."

"I know nothing about your being a barrister, sir; that doesn't appear."

"Well then, refer to the Law List."

"I have nothing to do with the Law List; produce it yourself when you come to your defence."

"No," said Dick, bitterly, "God knows you've not.

"I tell you what, sir, don't attempt to bandy words with me, because I'll not stand that sort of thing; whoever you may think you are, you are charged here as a felon, and that's all I know about you."

"Precisely," said Dick, "and that's all you wish to know; but, for all that, I shall insist on shutting out from this examination everything that is not strictly and legally evidence."

"And I tell you, sir, that you shall shut out nothing: a pretty thing indeed, if fellows like you are to go stealing honest people's property, and then are to be able to shut men's mouths against them. Now, witness—what did your master say to you?"

It was in vain Dick Doubtful objected again and again; that he quoted, argued, used every effort to show the magistrate the distinction between hearsay and proper evidence. The worthy man who had been bred up as a cobbler, and voted for Lord Burrowbridge in Lord knows how many parliaments, was as little able or willing to take a distinction in law as he would have been to take a degree in physic; and therefore we suppose he had been placed on the bench to jeopardise the lives and characters of every one brought before him, because Lord Burrowbridge must not be refused his nomination.

Doubtful seeing how hopeless was the argument against a man equally able and determined to do wrong, wisely gave up the fight, trusting to his own innocence to repair whatever injustice was done him, however trying and iniquitous it certainly was. The witness having been called upon to state what his master had told him, it amounted to a mere piece of information that Colonel Sprightly had no horse at his stables; and that in consequence of the alarm given by the ostler, they both sallied forth and endeavoured to trace which way Doubtful had gone. All that they could learn was that he had galloped violently across Lincoln's Inn-fields, and then pursued a western route;—having traced him into the Park, and put the matter into the hands of the policemen, these latter worthies were next called to prove everything they had heard on the road; and, in admirable keeping with the magistrate's knowledge of evidence, they were allowed to repeat what this man said, what that man asserted, and what the other man inferred, which was all made as much a matter of accusation as if each syllable had proceeded from Dick's own mouth.

The livery-stable keeper proved that he had never heard of Colonel Sprightly; no such a person had ever kept a horse at his stables, and that the horse taken was the one found in Doubtful's possession, which had been left in their care by Squire Higginbottom ;—that he had sent to make inquiries at the address given by Doubtful, where Colonel Sprightly lived, and that no such a person was there. One of the keepers of Putney Bridge then appeared to prove that Doubtful had cheated the toll, and that all endeavours to stop him had been perfectly useless; that he had been riding like a madman. The constable was then allowed to prove that the same complaint had been made to him by the keeper of the Kensington Gate, and that he had been enabled to trace the prisoner's course by the fury with which he had ridden. There was something said about a few old women and children having been ridden over ; but, luckily for Dick, the Solon on the Bench did not catch this important fact.

A fat individual now stood forward, and said that the horse was his property, and that he had lent it to his nephew, who put it up at the livery stables in question. Doubtful turned round, thinking he knew the voice, and there, to his horror, stood one of Sprightly's neighbours, the man with the pretty maid-servant, whose insolence he had resented.

Mr. Grimsditch speedily proved not only that no Colonel Sprightly lived in his neighbourhood, but that there was no such a place as Neilgherry Lodge; and that the prisoner, on the night of the robbery, had come to his house in a very suspicious manner, and when he could not obtain admittance, behaved with the most brutal violence, and tried to commit an assault upon his person.

The next witness was a constable—he had been down to Rochampton—there was such a place he admitted as Neilgherry Lodge; but the person living there was called Brown; who had been residing with a female of bad character, and had conspired with this woman to run away and carry with them the clothes of the unfortunate cook, who was thus shut out of the house and left without either home or character, or scarcely a rag to her back; moreover, said constable strongly suspected the prisoner at the bar was the identical Brown.

"'Pon my word," said Dick, "this is manufacturing evidence with a vengeance;—if you suspect that, why haven't you brought the cook herself? but, no matter." It was then found that the cook couldn't come ; but she was perfectly certain it was her master who had stolen the horse: and the cook's conviction seemed to have so much weight with the magistrate as to help forward, very materially, that of Dick Doubtful.

The cook having been disposed of, the two constables who had apprehended this desperate character next made their appearance:—having ascertained that the thief was in the neighbourhood of Wimbledon Common, they had posted themselves there to look for him, and on seeing him approach they had called to him to stop in the King's name, and used every effort to capture him;—that he had, however, treated their authority with the utmost contempt, and altogether eluded their pursuit, having thrown both of them down, thereby greatly endangering

their necks, &c. &c. That after his escape, he had taken the direction of Kingston; and, thinking it likely that he had some confederates in that neighbourhood, they had stayed there during that night, and resuming their pursuit on the following morning, had captured the object of their search, who after making several efforts to escape, had offered them a sum of money to let him go. This last fact seemed perfectly conclusive in the magistrate's opinion; and what it wanted in probability was fully made up by the two thief-takers declaring that he, Doubtful, was an old hand at this work, and was perfectly well known to them.

"Oh, oh!" said the magistrate, "I thought that would appear at last. Now, sir, what have you to say for yourself?—you wished us to postpone this conclusive evidence upon the ground that you were a barrister, forsooth. Now, sir, what name do you say is yours?—here's the Law List."

"I say that my name is Richard Doubtful."

"So I should think—very Doubtful, indeed;" interrupted the magistrate, at which all the constables laughed loudly, as in duty bound. "Well, there is such a name," pursued the magistrate, looking into the Law List, "Do you still mean to assert that you're the person?"

"Yes, I do," said Doubtful, "and here's the key of my chambers, which you see down in the Law List in Chancery-lane."

"We will soon prove that part of your story at any rate, by sending the constable to unlock the door if you have the key."

"No, indeed," said Dick, "I've a decided objection to submit my papers to the tender mercies of any constable that I have ever seen."

"Oh, very well, sir; if you prefer standing under the imputation of such a charge as this, to trusting your keys, if you have any, to the hands of a proper officer, who can have no corrupt motives, the consequences be upon your own head."

"Why," said Doubtful, "of two desperate choices, it is, perhaps, better to prefer the least;" and he put his hand in his pocket to produce the keys, but fate seemed determined to tilt against him; he felt first in one pouch and then in another, his countenance changing frightfully at each effort made; and sundry exclamations, such as "The Devil!" "Confound it!" &c., escaped him: at last, when, amidst the jeers of the bystanders, he had gone three times over every receptacle about his person, he finished the search by endeavouring to recollect, and then exclaimed—"Ah, I remember now, I left them on the dressing-table at Sir Job's."

"Sir Job's—what Sir Job's?" said the magistrate; and then, correcting himself—"but I beg your pardon, sir, any name will answer:—no wonder you were unwilling that an officer should go to these pretended chambers. Well, now, Mr. Doubtful, or Colonel Sprightly, or Mr. Brown, or whatever else you choose to be called, for it seems that you have passed yourself by at least two of these names; which do you now intend to stick to?"

"I feel that this conduct is very unfair," said poor Doubtful, growing desperately vexed.

"I never met a criminal, sir, who did not entertain some opinion of that sort," said the magistrate. "Now, if you have any defence to make, sir, you had better make it; as I fear I must commit you to take your trial for the felony at the Old Bailey."

"How is it possible, sir, I can make any defence, when you won't allow me the least time to inquire for my friends, or what has become of Colonel Sprightly."

"If you could give any reasonable account of yourself, sir, perhaps I might grant you that indulgence."

"All the account I can give of myself is the truth, sir; namely, that as I was coming home from Westminster, I met my old school-fellow, the colonel; he asked me to dine with him, and lent me his horse, which I put up at a livery stable; and on the following day I took it away again, and rode it down to dine with my friend; he certainly was absent from home, and I have not been able to account for his absence;" and then Dick went into the rest of the story as it really happened.

The livery-stable keeper was here recalled, but he utterly denied that Doubtful ever had put up any horse at his stables; and that he must have known that he was taking away what didn't belong to him; for that the animal in question was not a horse at all—it was a mare, and thus it must have been evident to him that it wasn't his property, which story was a mere excuse by which he wished to get rid of the charge brought against him.

"So I think—so I think;" said the magistrate. "I don't see how I should be discharging my duty if I did not send him to take his trial. You have thought fit to make several statements, sir, and every one of them proves to be unfounded."

"I grant it is unfortunate"—began Doubtful.

"—Yes, it is, very," interrupted the magistrate, "and so you'll find it."

Here a little gentleman came in, and said his client was now ready to be discharged, if the magistrate could oblige him by going through a little form at once.

"Oh, certainly," said the magistrate; "where is he?"

"Hutchings," said the little man, "just bring my client forward."

Obedient to the word of command, Doubtful stepped aside, and out of mere curiosity just gave a glance *en passant*. The client was a fine, tall, well-built man, most fashionably dressed, and his head was shaved as bare as a marine's, a regular close crop, through which the white skin of the scalp glistened in bright relief against what had once been a head of most luxuriant black hair. "Surely I have seen him before. It must be him; and yet, how can it be?—it certainly is—here, stay, stay!" cried Dick, "here is Colonel Sprightly himself, he can explain the whole of this absurd affair."

The horror of poor Sprightly at hearing his name thus publicly proclaimed was intense; he felt as if he could have annihilated Dick upon the spot: all his labour, all his sufferings were now vain; what could he do? he seemed pausing for a few moments in consideration of this emergency; and then, adopting a desperate resolution, turned upon the unfortunate

Dick, and said, with all the fashionable nonchalance imaginable, "Truly, you have the advantage, sir; I never had the pleasure of seeing you before."

"What—do you mean to say you're not Colonel Sprightly?"

"Yes, sir, I do; I never heard the name until this moment."

"I'm afraid, young man," interrupted the magistrate, addressing Doubtful, "that every step you take shows more and more strongly the fatal effects of falsehood and duplicity."

"Upon my word, sir."

"Never mind, sir, I'll settle your case presently. Now, sir," said the magistrate, addressing the colonel, "please to state to me your address and calling."

"I reside, sir, at Three Lantern-street, Kentish-town. I am a land-surveyor."

"Very good, sir, that's perfectly satisfactory; I shall now fine you five shillings for the assault which you yesterday committed, and I hope it will be a lesson to you never to appear here again; or if, by any accident you should at any future period come before a magistrate, you will at once acknowledge the propriety of giving the full name and address: as it is, you see you've had a hair-breadth escape;" just touching with his fingers at this word his own bald pericranium. A convulsive shudder seemed to creep through Sprightly's frame, as he recollected his loss, and while the myrmidons who understood it, tittered at the joke, the discomfited officer withdrew;—as he departed, however, he could not help feeling that he had put a vile trick upon his friend Doubtful, and, touched with compunction, he said, "You seem, sir, to have taken me for some one else; perhaps, if you can explain under what circumstances you made the mistake, I may possibly be of some use to you."

While Doubtful followed this suggestion, so far as briefly to run over circumstances of his case, Sprightly contrived to give him a sly wink of the eye, thus intimating his desire to remain *incog.*, and when Dick looked inquiringly at his cropped hair, the colonel completed the intelligence by raising his finger to his lip. Having heard the story as Dick told it, Sprightly, with that tact which marks the quickness of a man of the world from the man of letters, said to the magistrate, "Although I have not the honour of knowing Colonel Sprightly, nor can speak to his residing in any given spot, yet I am aware there is such a person in the East India Company's service now at home, for I met him the other day at dinner: there seems to be some extraordinary mistake in this matter, for one party persists in calling the animal a horse, and the other calls it a mare; but perhaps if you were to inquire if there was any other livery stable in the neighbourhood which has caused this mistake, that might throw some light upon this extraordinary affair."

"Oh, certainly," said the magistrate. "Livery-stable keeper, are there any similar establishments to your own in the same street?"

"Yes, sir, there's one next door—"

"That's it—that's it!" interrupted Doubtful; "I thought—I thought as I entered—there was something about the place that didn't look quite the same as when I saw it first!"

To this assertion the magistrate paid no sort of attention, as if Doubtful were a person wholly unentitled to any belief after the various blunders he had made; but turning to an officer, he told the latter to go to the stables in question, and request the proprietor and ostler to walk to the office. "And out of curiosity," said Sprightly, "I'll go too." For he had had sufficient experience of such worthies to know that it was possible for them to get up a job on an emergency. Accordingly, both the colonel and the officer set out; and after a brief interval, all four returned to say that a horse had been left on the evening in question at the stables next door to those which had been supposed to be robbed; and that on putting it beside the mare, they corresponded in an extraordinary degree, with the exception of their sex, and the fact that the horse was not quite so thorough-bred as the other animal.

As the ostler of the second stable entered the room, he looked round him for a moment, and then walking up to Doubtful, said, to the inexpressible joy of the latter, "This is the gentleman what left that horse with me a night or two ago. I wondered vhy he never came to fetch it."

The magistrate here generously admitted that this was one point in the prisoner's favour; but still he wanted to know where Colonel Sprightly was. Colonel Sprightly had been mentioned, and no such a person had appeared; and therefore he could not think, under the suspicious circumstances of the case, of allowing the prisoner to go at liberty without giving considerable bail to answer any charge that might be made against him; and for this purpose, Sprightly having departed in a cab, brought back in the course of a few minutes two gentlemen of known wealth, who having immediately given their required recognisances, the innocent object of so much unfortunate suspicion was allowed to withdraw, under the full impression of every one present that he was a very loose character; while Sprightly, who had completely hoodwinked poor, blind dame Justice, was very civilly bowed out by her inefficient representative whom he had so completely gulled; thus affording one proof more, if any were wanted, what abuses neglect will introduce into even the best institutions which human ingenuity prides itself upon devising.

With the events of the last two days, neither of our friends found any great cause of satisfaction. Doubtful well knew he had got into a position to be heartily laughed at, even if no more uncharitable construction were put upon his conduct; while Sprightly, besides being considerably bled, was rendered incapable of showing himself to his friends for the next three weeks at least. This, however, should be recorded in Doubtful's favour,—he completely forgave that public denial of him in the magistrate's office which had so materially injured his credit; and while both were fully chagrined, each shook hands with the other heartily, wishing at the bottom of his heart that his dear old college friend had been dead, and something more to boot, before they had "met and parted." The fact of Doubtful recognising Sprightly as his friend, coupled with the previous anxiety of the latter on being taken up not to disclose his name, the eyesore of his shorn front, and his inexplicable disappearance from the haunts of fashion, where he had necessarily broken many engagements he had positively under-

taken to fulfil, would, he was convinced, all combine to point him out to the laughter of his acquaintance. However, as he shook hands with the melancholy Doubtful, a bright idea occurred to him—"Egad!" said he, "I'll give out that I've had a brain fever, and had my head shaved." And with this notable resolution, he hurried home to make the most of his dilemma, while Dick mournfully and slowly bent his way to Chancery-lane, now for the first time pondering on a "most important case" which he felt not the slightest inclination to "report."

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## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-NINTH.

### SIR JOB'S INNOCENCE NO SHIELD AT LAST.

Scarcely had Doubtful left Hawarden Hall, where his counsels had been so little productive of benefit, than Sir Job Periwinkle received notice of some official person wishing to speak to him. Having desired that the party might be shown to his presence, the latter informed him that he was a messenger from the Secretary of State's office for the Home Department, charged to apprehend his lordship, on a warrant from the Secretary of State, for conspiring with one Costs, an attorney, to defeat the course of justice, by riotously preventing the execution of Paul Periwinkle, and causing the said Paul thereby to escape; with all of which he was charged by the confession of his accomplice Costs. This was pleasant information. Trusting, however, to his own innocence to defeat the machinations of the villain who had planned this matter, he quietly gave himself into custody, ordered his carriage, and set off for town.

Sir Job was one of those good people who imagine that any party innocent of the charge is sure to escape from it. It may be an old-fashioned, and what is emphatically called an English feeling; but it is far from being without great benefit; and circumstances frequently occur to prove its fallacy. The man who has himself suffered an unmerited prosecution, will ever afterwards be more likely to admit the possible innocence of others whom he may see accused; and it is a prejudice far too common in England, particularly among the magistracy, that every man placed in the prisoner's dock, is therefrom necessarily guilty. These feelings had been greatly prevalent in the mind of Sir Job, even in the case of his own son, in relation to whom conscience had frequently whispered that he had allowed too great a leaning in his own mind towards the darker side of the question. It was a melancholy feeling for a father who had himself given some of the most important evidence on which that son was convicted: and now that he found himself accused of a matter in which he had not only been wholly innocent, but which he had done his utmost to prevent, he more than ever questioned the prudence of his past conduct, and felt a degree of curiosity to see in what way Costs would support an accusation so wholly without found-

ation. Sir Job was, however, very little acquainted with the character of Costs, if he imagined basis to be at all a necessary ingredient in any prosecution that Costs might undertake: there was only one matter to which the attorney would have considered it needful to look for an instant—the fees, namely, and not the foundation of the case. On arriving in London, he had a somewhat better notion of this, when, being taken before the magistrates, he found Costs ready to proceed with his information. Sir Job having denied all participation in any such matter as that with which he stood charged, Costs was called upon to prove his case, and made oath to the following effect:—

"That immediately after the trial of his son, Sir Job had solicited him to procure Paul Periwinkle's rescue from the gallows, or some facility for his breaking out of prison; that he had made great efforts to dissuade him on the score of the impropriety of his proceedings; and at last, being overcome by the distress which he felt for the family, he had consented that, if a pardon were not obtained, he would introduce him to some party who might be likely to assist him in the accomplishment of his wish:" and, in short, with every ingenuity that could be devised, he contrived to place upon the back of the unhappy Sir Job every particle of the guilt of that transaction, which had been effected wholely and solely by himself under the superintendence of Charles; who, however much we may blame him, as a subject, for his part in that transaction, we should be unable at all to contemplate as a brother if he had acted differently. For our own parts, we have the most thorough contempt for one part of the Roman virtues; and, right or wrong, we should be inclined to uphold a brother against all the governments that ever existed, in rescuing a beloved relative from an ignominious death.

On hearing the deposition made by Costs, the magistrates had no alternative but to hold Sir Job to bail in a very large amount, which they did, binding, at the same time, the wily Costs over to prosecute; this done, the unfortunate knight was left to consider how he might best make apparent to the public that innocence which he had been so accustomed to believe was a perfect shield against all enemies and attacks whatsoever.

The result of that day's examination had slightly shaken this notion; and when he lay down on his pillow, he found it was not so easy to make an escape from a disastrous combination of circumstances. The first question he asked himself was, who could best prove his entire immunity from the transaction?—the answer in a moment was, his son Charles, who was now on his way to the West Indies, a matter perfectly well known to Costs, before he took a single step in this prosecution. Well, then, Doctor Bamboozle might be useful to prove the anxiety with which he had sent the latter off to inform the government even against his own son; but Costs had doubly shut him out there; in the first place, Bamboozle had been carried off to Lord-knows-where; and in the next place, Costs had cunningly sworn that this informing the Secretary of State was part of Sir Job's plot, to divert suspicion from the real channel; an assertion to which circumstances gave an air of

great probability, when we remember that the information to the Secretary of State arrived much too late to do any good, but that the same intelligence communicated to any of the neighbouring magistrates would most effectually have prevented that escape, which really did occur. As Sir Job turned these matters over in his mind, his restlessness and misery increased with every moment; the idea that he who had taken so much pains, and inflicted so much misery on himself and others, in order to stand perfectly unspotted before the world—the idea that he should now be placed in such an awkward position, was indeed misery in the extreme. After many futile cogitations he at last, in a paroxysm of joy, made quite sure that he had discovered the remedy for all his sorrows by simply moving to have his trial postponed until a material witness could return from the West Indies, intending instantly to send out a messenger to Charles. But then again, he reflected that in all probability Charles was himself a guilty party, and that in this light it might be highly inexpedient to put him in the witness-box. Thus, then, his dilemma increased at every turn, and he was finally unable to see any mode of extricating himself from his position. He fell into a troubled sleep, perfectly convinced that innocence, though a very good thing to possess, was, nevertheless, not quite that extraordinary and infallible protection for which he had once taken it.

Early on the ensuing morning, a council of Sir Job's friends was summoned; and it was unanimously agreed, after a long discussion, that less evil would result from requiring the attendance of Charles in England and putting off the trial, than from any other course. It was true it might appear that Charles was implicated in the escape of his brother; but the motive was so natural, and the prejudice of every right feeling so strong in its favour, that it would be much better this should so appear, than that Sir Job, who had the wisdom and gravity of forty more years to sustain, besides the high office of London's chief magistrate, should be placed in the same position; moreover, by this course, the villany and roguery of Costs would meet its just reward.

After great groaning, and grief without end, Sir Job agreed that this was the only course that could with safety be adopted. A messenger was accordingly despatched to the West Indies, and leave obtained to postpone the trial till such time as he should return.

Costs, on hearing what had taken place, exhibited signs of considerable horror; and, as Wrynecker was known to be Sir Job's attorney on many occasions, he lost no opportunity of putting himself in the way of Leather-breeches, thinking it possible that Sir Job might desire to buy him off. He had unfortunately now got himself into such a complete dilemma by his rapacious villany, that he began to be somewhat uneasy in his position; as, however, no offer was made, he was too knowing a soldier to be over anxious in proposing any such step himself, but wisely trusted to a friend of great influence, who had often before assisted him, but whose name, it seems, ought not to be mentioned to ears polite; and as he was universally said to possess this person's luck and his own also, it did not surprise the majority of those acquainted with his powerful connexions, when intelligence was received that no such a person as

Charles Periwinkle had ever arrived at the island of Jamaica;—they were perfectly aware of the appointment, it is true, but neither ship nor attorney-general had come to hand. On the stating of these facts on affidavit, a second postponement of the trial was allowed for a brief period, to give time for the arrival of one or two packets, which Sir Job fondly hoped would contain either intelligence of his son's safe appearance in Jamaica, or perhaps bring back to him his son in person. Packet after packet, however, came in, but still nothing was heard or known of the Jamaica attorney-general. Sir Job had thought his case sufficiently melancholy and unhappy before: now, when to every other calamity was added the probable loss of his eldest son, fortune did indeed seem to bear him utterly down; and growing indifferent to life, as one trial after another succeeded, his usual energies at length appeared to give way, and he made no farther effort to postpone his trial. In this despair, however, Doubtful would by no means allow him to continue; and while the attorney-general prosecuted by order of the government, for the monarch had taken into his head a very strong notion as to Sir Job's guilt, and, as was usual with him who could not even allow the time-pieces of his palace to go without his personal interference, somewhat of the resemblance of a state prosecution was thus given to a matter, which, had the character of the witness supporting it alone been considered, would have been laughed out of court. Some of the most eminent counsel of the bar were, it is true, engaged on the other side, but nothing could have been more difficult than the game which had to be fought; for not only had they to combat with the direct evidence of Costs, but the incautious conduct of Sir Job himself.

Accordingly, the day of trial came on: Costs positively swore that Sir Job had hired him to arrange the rescue, and that the remorse at having taken part in an illegal transaction had made him frequently determined to reveal his share in the affair, but that Sir Job had from time to time entreated his concealment, and given him repeated sums of money to secure this information; similar having been given at the time of his first examination. A search warrant had been granted; and, under its authority, Sir Job's papers had been seized, and amongst them had been discovered a whole quantity of Costs' receipts for the various sums so advanced, and which Sir Job, with the precaution rather of a trader than a lawyer, had taken from the rascal, thereby fondly imagining that he was getting some security upon the fellow's good behaviour, whereas in reality he had been sedulously tying the rope round his own neck. These, combined with Costs' direct testimony on the most minute points, and the production of several letters which he had received from Sir Job, declaring that the inclosed draft should be the last he should ever receive, whatever disclosures he might make, and other similar language, had the effect of so corroborating Costs, as to make the otherwise worthless testimony of a notorious scamp a mass of evidence now very difficult to deal with.

# PAUL PERIWINKLE;

OR,

## The Pressgang.

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### BOOK III.

### CHAPTER THE FIRST.

DISCLOSES A SLIGHT FISSURE IN THE "UNFAILING SHIELD OF INNOCENCE."

We left the patriarch in considerable difficulty; and every step that he either took himself, or witnessed taken for him, seemed to increase the intricacy of the dilemma in which he was placed.

It was in vain that Sir Job's counsel cross-examined the witnesses with all the ingenuity and severity of which that difficult art is capable. True it was that Costs appeared there a most undeniable villain; but while it was impossible for the defendant to prove with what purpose these letters were written, the belief was unavoidable, that a villain had for once spoken the truth, however corrupt might be the motives which had led him so to do. The only chance that remained for Sir Job, was by calling testimony to character of so strong a description as should lead the jury to give a feeling rather than a strictly legal verdict. Unfortunately for the cause of innocence, our criminal laws did not then admit any speech of counsel in behalf of prisoners unless accused of treason. The searching argument, therefore, which might have been addressed to the jury on the subject of Costs on one showing, and of Sir Job on the other, was here lost. The case was submitted to the careful summing up of a judge celebrated rather for his severe strictness than any weak failing towards the side of mercy, and with nothing more to lenicise it than a chain of splendid and cold reasoning, the case went to the jury. After ten minutes' deliberation, Sir Job found that the shield of innocence had such a sad *hiatus* in the centre of it as to allow of his standing at the dock of the Old Bailey convicted of a criminal misdemeanour—he who had done his utmost to prevent anything of the sort; while the truly guilty party, within a few yards of him, stood pardoned, and rewarded for committing the frightful crime of swearing falsely against him.

When Sir Job beheld the jury turn round without retiring from their box and give a verdict of guilty, accompanied by a recommendation to mercy, he hardly knew whether he breathed in the same world which

for the last sixty years he had so gratefully inhabited. It seemed to him so incredible and monstrous that a *British* jury—for that was the sorrow of the thing to him—could believe the word of such a perjured traitor as Costs, that he almost in his anger and despair acknowledged that he was ashamed of his country. The sonorous voice of the judge, however, who began passing sentence, awoke him from these sad reveries; and in order that our readers may form some faint idea of Sir Job's feelings, we will transcribe the sentence word for word as it was passed.

"Sir Job Periwinkle, after a most long and patient trial by a jury of your country, you are found guilty of having unlawfully conspired with William Costs to pervert the course of justice, by the rescue of your son, Paul Periwinkle, who had been condemned for one of the most atrocious crimes of which the laws of God or man take cognizance. Such a case as this"—

"—My lord," interrupted Sir Job, with an earnestness of manner that might have carried conviction to a very doubtful mind, "I enter my most solemn protest before God and man that I am innocent!!——"

"—The jury say that you are not," resumed his lordship; "and you will remember that they have no interest in giving an opinion either one way or the other. I am sure if they could have acquitted you consistently with their duty, it would have afforded them as well as me one of the greatest pleasures; but you have yourself by your actions and letters put that beyond their power. It is not for me to reweigh the trial already decided; I am here only to pass sentence, and in so doing I feel it my duty to express how painful is the part your conduct has imposed upon me. Courts of law at all times present a melancholy view of human life, but never do the spectacles herein witnessed produce so much pain as when they present a lamentable instance, as in your case, of one whom excess of proper feeling has led to the sacrifice of a character sustained through a long series of years with honour, integrity, and respect. It is more especially my duty to point this out in your case. Not only have you been tempted into a breach of those laws which, as a magistrate, you have sworn to protect, but you have even been seduced to carry into effect a system of hypocrisy, violence, and untruth. These vices, the possession of no other virtues can redeem; and the law in punishing you for the exact offence you have committed, is the mere instrument of Providence in bringing down upon your head a severe retribution for the other unworthy acts of which you have been guilty. Though a strong and uncontrollable affection for your son might have hurried you into an outbreak of violence to save him from an ignominious death, there must, notwithstanding, have been an utter want of principle in that breast which could needlessly parade the pretended virtue of hurrying to the secretary of state with the information that a son was about to be rescued from the operation of the law. This assumption of the patriotism of a Brutus, combined with the very worst hypocrisy, must, I am sure, present to you a picture of your own character which the contrition and remorse of a whole life will barely suffice to obliterate."

"I declare to you, my lord, upon my honour I am innocent; your lordship and the jury are labouring under a perfect delusion."

"Don't interrupt the Court, sir," said his lordship, very sharply; "it is neither decent nor proper in you to say that either the jury or the Court are labouring under a delusion."

"Good God!" exclaimed Sir Job, in bitterness of soul, "is it possible that such things can be in *Britain!*" But he soon found that they could be, and that with marvellous facility. Both the usher of the court before, and the governor of the jail behind him, seeing that the lion was already in his death throes, and that the glory of the lord mayor had for ever departed, bawled out, in most vociferous assistance of his lordship,

"Silence, prisoner, silence!"—And this too from the governor of the jail! a man who had hitherto trembled at his very nod! It was too bad.

When all this occurred, bitterly did Sir Job's conscience prick him; not for the want of principle on which his lordship had expatiated so freely, nor because he acknowledged that kind of Providence which his lordship had so very questionably invoked, but for the doubt and disbelief with which he had heard the agonised cry of his favourite son Paul, from a very similar dock, and yet in defiance of its exclamation had still rejected the truth of his asserted innocence. However, silence being once more restored, his lordship proceeded—"The sentence of this Court is, that you shall be imprisoned for the space of one calendar month, and pay a fine of one thousand pounds."

"My lord," said one of the junior counsel, quickly bobbing up, "I have a motion to submit to your lordship for expenses of the witnesses in the last prosecution but one; they amount to a mere trifle, my lord, and have always been granted in similar cases."

Alas! poor human vanity! Thus was the great and rich Sir Job sentenced to degradation, fine, and imprisonment, in one breath; and a mere trumpery matter of some odd shillings occupying equal importance in the next.

It is only when the wheel of Fortune leaves us at the base of her arbitrary orbit, that we really can estimate the position we may have once held near its summit. Upon the bench where sat the judge presiding, Sir Job beheld many men with whom he himself had sat in judgment, whom he had entertained at his table, and allowed to bask in all the sunshine of his prosperity. From these, not one pitying look accompanied him back to his prison; not one kindly expression of sympathy, not one particle of doubt as to the justice of the sentence, nor one breath of suspicion as to his guilt, now reached him. Heart-broken, despairing, praying that Heaven might then resume that life which he in the first bitter moments felt only a torment, Sir Job turned to depart, scarcely able to repress the bursting tear which his agonised frame longed to discharge.

"Give me your hand before you go," cried a voice thick with the emotion which coined it. "God bless you, my old friend," said the sturdy Trojan, scrambling up upon the counsel's seat, in utter defiance of wigs, powder, &c. "and if you're not as innocent a man—for all that's

past—as any in the king's dominions, I never ask to breathe God's breath again."

"Who are you, sir?" said the judge, who had heard this, and beheld with no very pleased expression of countenance the sturdy grasp with which Wrynecker wrung the hand of Sir Job over the front of the dock, in defiance both of prejudice and decorum.

"I am John Wrynecker," bawled the worthy solicitor in a tone that left no doubt as to his identity.

"You are, are you sir?—Then as you seem so fond of the society of the guilty, you had better accompany him to prison."

"I should have no objection to do that, either, my lord."

"What do you say, sir?" demanded the judge, in great wrath.

"That I should feel it a happiness to accompany so innocent a friend to prison," stoutly bawled old Squaretoes.

"Oh! you do! do you?—Then your happiness is complete, sir. You now stand committed for contempt of court."

"I heartily thank you, my lord," said Wrynecker. "I believe the present is the only act of kindness which has ever distinguished your lordship's judicial career."

This intemperate reply, however natural to the speaker, by no means improved his case. The usher of the court had hold of him in a twinkling, and away he went to prison as magnanimously as one of the seven bishops. There was something in this devotion that deeply touched Sir Job; and though he grieved that an old and valued friend should have got himself into disgrace on his account, he could not but feel that it was almost worth experiencing the injustice of his lot, to feel the exquisite pleasure of knowing all his adversity and disgrace had been unable to deprive him of so staunch an affection.

While absorbed in watching Wrynecker's exit, there was another demonstration made towards him which he failed to perceive; to this his attention was, however, drawn by the words uttered on the occasion:

"Sir Job Periwinkle, I have been trying to catch your eye for the last ten minutes. Permit me to pay my respects to you before you leave."

Did he hear aright—respects to him? was there any one left who would still pay him that formal courtesy which he had so often heard without attaching to it the slightest value?—the kindness of which now, however, appeared to him indescribably great. He looked round, and could scarcely believe that these words issued from the lips of some one in the canonicals of a counsel. At first he was unable to recognise the speaker, but another moment's glance convinced him that it was Dick Doubtful. Sir Job found that he could not trust his words to speak, he therefore contented himself with mutely expressing all he felt by a bow.

"Before you share the fate of Sir Walter Raleigh in an unjust imprisonment," said Dick, magnanimously choosing to think for himself, in spite of either judge or jury, "you will do well to remember his words:—'Stone walls do not a prison make—you cannot chain the mind.' Remember me to all the authorities at Hawarden when you see them next." Doubtful had no time to add more, for the turn-

key, who saw a storm gathering on the brow of his lordship, thought better to avert it from his own head, by quickly removing this unexpected object of sympathy; and with a melancholy reflection on the instability of all human happiness, Dick Doubtful walked to his robing-room, and Sir Job Periwinkle to his cell. "After that," muttered the former, "who can pride himself on anything but the surety of death and quarter-day!"

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## CHAPTER THE SECOND.

### CONTAINS A PROPOSITION *not* FOUND IN EUCLID.

As soon as Wrynecker found himself in the same prison with Sir Job, he took advantage of that part of the judge's committal of himself which recommended him to carry his companionship to prison; and bribing the subordinates right and left, he ordered an excellent dinner to be served for himself and friend, and determined that no further care should molest him. It was well for his companion in adversity that Fortune had bestowed upon him this faithful ally, for so deeply had the shock of his misfortunes struck his mind, that in the first ebullition of despair he might have given way to the melancholy feelings which seemed to crush him to the earth. Finding that the task of consolation was heavier than he expected, Wrynecker, at the conclusion of the second bottle, startled his friend by a sudden declaration for which he had been little prepared.

"I tell you what, Sir Job, I've long had half-a-dozen minds to give up all further bothering about a profession. I've made more money already than I can ever live to expend; it's perfectly idle to fret myself for the benefit of some other man, who may come after me and disperse, with the utmost prodigality, what I have taken so much pains to collect. I have, therefore, determined to enjoy a little bit of travelling in my own fashion, drop the shop, and see what the world is like at large—in short, having heard you declare your intention of visiting your estates in the West Indies if this iniquitous trial went against you, I now propose to get my preparations complete by the time your imprisonment ends, and go with you. I've often had a great longing to see what these parts are really like; and though I can tell by the curl of your lip that you're going to make some objection, I warn you it's no use, my mind's made up to go."

For some time, Sir Job, thinking this was the result of a second bottle, endeavoured by every means in his power to combat his friend's resolution; but when on the next morning Wrynecker informed him that he had commenced the steps necessary for accompanying him abroad, Sir Job found to his delight that he was sincere in his intentions, and that a companion of no ordinary quality was to cheer the dreary nature of that absence from England which was now the only cheering point to which he could look forward. Wearily as the allotted period of punishment crept by, it at length passed, and the requisite

measures having been previously taken, Sir Job on his release stepped from the prison-door into his carriage, and drove off for Portsmouth, where his suite were waiting to embark with him.

Doubtful, since the first hour of his committal, had been assiduous to a degree, in paying every sort of attention to himself and family; and on the evening of his arrival at the sea-port, when Lady Periwinkle and Julia had retired to rest, Sir Job, who was very anxious to follow them, well knowing how much he had to get through, watched with considerable anxiety what appeared to him the dilatory conduct of Dick the Dubious. After what he considered one or two broad hints, which the other seemed very slow in apprehending, Dick gulped down a glass of wine, and, with sundry fidgetings in his chair, the examination of his nails, and other bashful preliminaries, thus delivered himself:—

"Now, there is a very delicate matter, Sir Job, on which I have long wished to speak to you."

Sir Job opened his eyes in considerable amazement, fully prepared to hear of some new misfortune, for these of late had been showered so plentifully upon him, that he almost doubted whether they were ever to cease again: however, he prudently waited the issue of Doubtful's communication, well knowing that a fidgetty and bashful man would take as much time to bring any matter to an opening, as two tolerably patient people occupy in bringing it to the most successful issue. By this prudent management, therefore, Doubtful gradually found courage to say,—

"I suppose I need hardly inform you, Sir Job, that I have long been most sincerely attached to your daughter, Miss Julia Periwinkle;" —here Dick paused for some expression of surprise, approbation, or disapproval—being relieved in his extremity, however, by neither of which, he was obliged to proceed.

"While the world went prosperously with you, I confess I had many doubts and difficulties how I ought to act, since any suitor to your daughter, unless one of much larger fortune than I can pretend to be, might have been open to the imputation of interested motives."

"My dear Mr. Doubtful—" began Sir Job.

"Yes, I know it is the case; you need not attempt to hide the fact from my conviction; it is at once obvious that it always must have been so. But although it is a very delicate matter to assert, I do believe that I do not wrong the young lady in imagining that if your consent were granted, I might be so fortunate as to crown it with that of the lady herself: I don't know, you know; I perhaps may speak from too partial impressions; I am happy to say that fortune has now so far altered our relative position, that I may venture to open the subject to you without fear of having any other motive whatever attributed to me beyond that sincere affection and esteem which your daughter's virtues and beauty are so well fitted to inspire;—in a word, Sir Job, can you, if I gain the lady's consent, add yours, to consider me as your son-in-law?"

"Son-in-law!" gasped Sir Job, grasping Doubtful most warmly by the hand;—he could get no further, but, jumping from his chair, and striding up and down the room for a few paces, mutely endeavoured to

regain that composure which would enable him to express those feelings which rose uppermost in his generous bosom on this occasion.

"How little," he at first exclaimed,—"how little in this world can we distinguish happiness at first sight! Ah, Mr. Doubtful, she comes to us in a thousand guises, and how often and how blindly do we not reject her in all; while adversity and shame, because they're often cloaked in gayer habits, are clasped to our bosoms—with all the frenzy of delirium!—Accept you as my son-in-law!—there was not a moment in the brightest hour of my worldly fortunes when I should not have been delighted to think that such a title was borne by one I so much esteem. I can only rejoice that your choice has fallen so well. A few nights after the first bitterness of my recent calamity, nothing but the soothing kindness, the unlooked-for fortitude, of that poor girl whom we both love, prevented me from terminating my own sorrows: and now mark what a happiness would have been lost to me. It is unnecessary for me to say I consent to your marriage. I do more, Mr. Doubtful; I acknowledge I receive your offer with the highest pleasure, for it has long been known to me that my own child's happiness is involved in this question; and though you have been too manly to say as much yourself, I am sure you are equally aware of it."

Dick's ears tingled with delight at this announcement; for though Sir Job was so far right that Doubtful had already received sundry assurances of the fact from the party—whom, in his own phraseology, he would have termed the best evidence on the point,—yet, still he found it was, if possible, even more delightful to be assured of this interesting truth from one who had enjoyed such ample opportunities of observation as Sir Job, without the least motive for colouring facts. "There is only one thing," continued the latter, "which makes me at all uneasy for your future mutual happiness; namely, your profession."

"Why yes, Sir Job, I thought of that; and though it is true that the slight fortune I possess can scarcely accustom Julia to all the luxuries she has hitherto enjoyed, yet still, as she is content to encounter their privation till such a time as—"

"For a time!" interrupted Sir Job, with considerable emphasis; "do you still know me so little as to imagine that any consideration of fortune would induce me at such a moment to mention your profession? No, thank Heaven, whatever mischances may have befallen me, they have, at least, left me the power of putting all whom I hold dear beyond the reach of any pecuniary vexations. No, sir, you need never more trouble yourself with any concern on that subject; but as I know the honours of a profession like yours cannot be relinquished without deep regret, I was merely considering whether an alliance with a family like my own, which Fortune for some inexplicable cause seems to select now for the butt, as it was once the cherished object of her cares,—I say, sir, I was thinking how far such an alliance might affect you at the bar."

"Oh, Sir Job, if that is all, I beg you will not distress yourself. I have considered the subject maturely, and have fully resolved to give up the practice of the Bar in England to those who think it more agreeable in pursuit than I do."

Had the Governor of Portsmouth waited upon Sir Job at that moment to proffer to him the crown of England, such a step could not, in the worthy citizen's mind, have produced more perfect surprise than did this last assertion of Dick Doubtful.

"Give up the practice of the Bar in England! why, I thought you had been perfectly devoted to it!!"

"And you thought rightly, but injustice would make hateful a paradise; and that you may not think me capricious, I must tell you that I have been so teased and annoyed by certain parties of my own standing about that silly scrape into which Colonel Sprightly got me, that I have determined to abandon the whole affair altogether, and go out to practise in the colony for which you are now starting; while it is not impossible that if you see fit to allow of my union with your daughter before you start, I may obtain a passage in the same ship with yourself, which will greatly add to the comfort and convenience of us all."

"Mr. Doubtful, I think you're acting hastily, and if you'll be advised by me, you'll consider the matter twice before you give up your prospects in England for a little mere silly bantering on a matter in which chance had laid your conduct open to a disagreeable, but, after all, a harmless joke. Consider for a moment—after all that may have passed, can any one believe that you were actuated by the least improper motive on that occasion? The supposition would be too absurd for the most distant consideration."

"Why yes, I am perfectly aware of that; but still you see it is a very delicate matter, and I confess, it has given me a good deal of annoyance to which there is no possible occasion for my subjecting myself; and moreover, competition at the Bar is of that close nature, that unless a man possesses brilliant abilities of the first order, to which I don't pretend, or numerous connexions in the law, which I certainly do not possess, the struggle is a very long—a very delicate, and a very doubtful one, let me tell you. In a new colony, this is not so; there—there is a comparative opening for all who choose to be moderately industrious, and a humbler style of capacity is sufficient. I have no ties to bind me to England, and I should be sorry to deprive my wife of a father like yourself, or to deprive a friend like you of the companionship of so inestimable a daughter."

"Mr. Doubtful," said Sir Job, "this is kindly and nobly argued of you; and whether you take her from my side, or whether you do not, I should equally be delighted to have you for a son-in-law. But, however, it is a matter which, under all the circumstances of the case, requires some consideration: I will, therefore, give no decided answer on any one point of this marriage until to-morrow morning. In the mean time, permit me to assure you, that for all your conduct since I first had the gratification of your friendship, I shall ever feel the deepest thankfulness."

With this, Sir Job stretched forth his hand, and Dick having firmly clasped it, bade him good night, and withdrew in a state of purturbation and suspense, which it appears the fate of lovers of all classes to undergo.

## CHAPTER THE THIRD.

### CONTAINS A LADY'S REASONS.

"But why, madam, why—I insist on knowing—do you oppose this union?—" angrily demanded Sir Job, stopping short in the tiger-like pace with which he perpetually strided from one end to the other of the apartment, or rather cage, in which breakfast had been served at the hotel.

"Why do I oppose this union!" petulantly returned Lady Periwinkle, drawing up her majestic form, and tossing her head on high, as Io might have done after some special communication with Jupiter;—"I have many reasons, Sir Job, for my conduct."

"D—n it, madam, so you've told me fifty times; but will you name one of them?"

"Oh, certainly, sir—certainly, sir, since you ask for it in so gentleman-like a manner. I oppose this union for the best of all reasons, because I do."

"Patience of my fathers—was there ever such a provoking fool in this world! I do believe, though naturalists have failed to inform us of the fact, that after fifty, a woman changes her sex, and thus makes the third in the creation."

"What do you mean, Sir Job? what do *you* mean?—It is time you should give me some reason of yours when you give utterance to such free-thinking opinions as that," quickly returned her ladyship, who now felt touched to the quick by her opponent's exclamation,—for this simple cause, that she was not able to understand it.

Without noticing, however, the emotion which his language had called forth, Sir Job continued to pace the room muttering broken exclamations to himself;—"I'm sure she's attached to him—must be attached to him;—better by far to see her married to a man she cares for with nothing, than mistress of any establishment amidst a splendour unable to occupy the heart."

"One would think, Sir Job, you were still in your childhood—to hear you talk in this way about hearts, and similar nonsense: hearts have nothing to do in the matter."

"In marriages like yours, I grant not, madam; but in this I'll take very good care that they have everything to do in the matter."

"You may be as personal as you like, Sir Job: a man who has brought his family to this pitch of ruin, deserves a refuge in universal compassion; you can say what you please, sir, I shall not be at the trouble to contradict you; but this I must remark, that your intentions in favour of my daughter are somewhat too late, as I have already accepted for her the offer of Alderman Quickstead."

"What, madam, do you dare to tell me this to my face,—and without having consulted me in any one part of the step you have taken?"

"In my opinion, Sir Job, it is quite enough for a young lady if the

mother sees the propriety of the marriage; she is the parent to be looked to. You have your sons, sir, and very prettily you have brought them up, it must be acknowledged."

"Well was my name Job!" exclaimed the patriarch, clasping his hands, and looking upwards, "for I much doubt if my namesake had half such a blister of a wife as I have.—It is my positive orders, madam, that you sit down and write instantly to Alderman Quickstead, and make him acquainted with the fact that you have acted without my concurrence."

"Indeed, sir, I shall do nothing of the sort. It is too late to retract; and even if it were not, it is a much more fit and proper match for my daughter than one of your moneyless aristocratic professions, which scarcely allows a man to keep himself, much less a wife and children."

While Lady Periwinkle was still speaking, one of the attendants brought in a letter, saying, "From Sir Charles Quickstead."

"Ah, this decides the matter!" said Lady Periwinkle in great triumph, holding out her hand.

"It's not for you, madam, but Sir Job," said the bearer—delivering it to the husband.

"That is like you men," exclaimed her ladyship, endeavouring to master her chagrin: "though neither constant nor consistent in anything else, you none of you forget to support one another in tyrannising over women. The Alderman might have known very well that I was the proper person to whom to address such a correspondence."

"I wish he had, madam; I should have been spared the degradation of receiving this note, which, at least, I have not deserved:" and, having previously glanced over the contents, he proceeded to read aloud the following exquisite communication:—

"Alderman Quickstead presents his compliments to Lady Periwinkle, and has received her note on his return from the country. The Alderman certainly would have felt great pleasure in connecting himself with Lady Periwinkle, but the circumstances in which your ladyship's family at present stands, render such a union no longer possible."

"What!" shrieked Lady Periwinkle, "does he dare—"

"Yes, madam, he does dare: it is the only piece of daring in the Alderman's character for which I can commend him. Pray make the most of it. The note is very matrimonial. It is as nice an intermingling of the second person and the third as I have seen for some time;" and Sir Job laid down the letter for Lady Periwinkle's perusal.

"It's all your folly, sir," gasped forth the unhappy mother; "all of you and your folly that my daughter's marriage is broken off, and my happiness ruined."

"As to your own happiness, that was settled the moment you had anything to do with it, so don't be concerned about that; your daughter now stands a chance of a marriage really suitable for her, and if you've lost your happiness, she has gained hers." And, far from sorry that his wife had thus brought this crisis on herself, Sir Job

retired, leaving her, as a plea, to the use of that meditation which he trusted would reconcile her to a union which she could no longer oppose with success.

Sir Job was certainly not a very deep thinker, or he would have abstained from forming any such absurd expectations of his wife's docility; for no sooner was she left alone, than having torn the treacherous Alderman's letter into portions as minute as possible, she devoted her attention to the consideration of how and in what manner she could best prolong the struggle, and gain her own way. Not that by possessing this she expected the least possible benefit; that had nothing on earth to do with the matter. Had she been questioned on the subject, she would doubtless have confessed that she wanted her own way because she did, and marvellous indeed would have been the skill that could have obtained from her any more rational account of her opposition.

After various cogitations pro and con, she at length satisfactorily arranged in her own mind the only line of operations by which she could succeed; and certainly they were sufficiently subtle to warrant even her expectations of success. She resolved to abandon the open warfare, and retreating to the fastnesses of hesitation, doubt, and delay, there to fight in detail that enemy whom she found was not to be conquered in the unpositioned plains of opposition. With this purpose she sought Sir Job forthwith, and putting on all the appearance of a penitent, expressed her regret that her views should have differed from his—her great anxiety for her daughter's happiness, and other common-places, which all opponents even of the smallest capacity learn to use with great facility. In conclusion, she expressed her readiness to withdraw all resistance to her daughter's marriage, provided only that Mr. Doubtful should not press any union before their leaving England, and should abstain from seeking a passage in the same ship.

Sir Job, good man, who was all candour and innocence, or at least as much so as the naughty knowledge of this world will permit any denizen of London to be, was on the present occasion perfectly deceived. He took every statement made by his wife to be a matter of literal and perfect truth, and being almost as ignorant as herself of any actual reason why she should so oppose Doubtful's marriage with his daughter, he looked upon these dubitations of Lady Periwinkle as proceeding from a real motherly regard, fearful of too easily confiding the happiness of a daughter to a member of the common enemy of the sex—man—and therefore anxious beforehand to gain as large a security as possible in the tested strength of their affection.

It was a very beautiful species of reasoning; but how would the patriarch have been startled, could he have seen in it the real truth! as did the more germain quickness of his daughter Julia—at once detecting the manœuvre and intention; namely, to gain from the last chances of delay that object which she had failed to obtain in a more straightforward manner; and all this matter for the simple reason, that having once opposed the match, she could not bring her mind to adopt any other line of conduct towards it.

## CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

### FATE AND LADY PERIWINKLE FALL OUT AT SPITHEAD.

When the lovers were made acquainted with the mutual compromise of Sir Job and Lady Periwinkle, their dismay certainly was great, and even the most callous looker-on cannot but condemn the cruelty which thus denied them that pleasure which is the greatest in life; namely, the mutual enjoyment of two young people in the society of each other, while attachment had surrounded it with a brightness and a witchery too brilliant to endure. However, as there was no help for their misfortunes, our friends were obliged to submit.

Doubtful took his passage in a vessel which was to sail in the same convoy with Sir Job's, and, removing his few household gods to Portsmouth, the patriarch, now disgraced and degraded in the eyes of all the friends of his prosperity, and only supported by that innocence which is, indeed, a bitter tonic in such a case, embarked the diminished number of his family on board the ship. Money had procured excellent quarters for him, and Doubtful having seen him safely ensconced in his cabin on the night previous to their sailing, went on board his own transport—thinking to content himself with watching the vessel which contained his own hopes unmoor in the grey twilight of the morning, and proceed in company with his own to sea.

Poor Dick was certainly very much downcast as he returned from the leave-taking, and fully conscious how much of his present affliction he owed to his future mother-in-law, in an abstracted mood he allowed his mind to glance at the various contingencies of a sea-existence, in a low soliloquy uttered while the sleepy ship's boys were rowing him from one vessel to the other, thus:—

"Well, Lady Periwinkle, if I should have seen the last of you, I don't mean to say anything uncharitable, but if I should have seen the last of you, no matter! If sea-sickness—but, no, I'm afraid that the sea will be much more sick of her than she of the sea, before they get to the end of their journey;—however, if, by any blessed stroke of fortune, as I said before, sea-sickness, a roll of the ship, a loose block, or any other happy little matter, should deprive Julia of her mother before I see them again, it's not myself that would weep my eyes out, anyhow!" And with this fortifying matter of consolation, he, with some difficulty, mounted to the deck of his own vessel, and feeling his hand somewhat warmly clasped, peered forward to take a look at the friendly grasper, and there to his astonishment and delight stood Wrynecker, his shoes as broad, his coat as wide, and his buckskin breeches as undeniably smooth and dirty, as when he first beheld them.

"What, Mr. Wrynecker, you here!—what could have brought you down to Portsmouth?"

"The coach," replied Wrynecker, making one of those profound revelations which occasionally illumine mankind.

"Yes, Mr. Wrynecker, I understand that—but I mean, what brought you out here on board a ship?"

"Why, the boat."

"Ah! ah! I see, you have some important matter in hand, which you can only communicate to me in private: I only meant, without any offence, to inquire what you are going to do here."

"My duty."

Dick now fairly gave up the task of gaining any information from "Square-toes" until such time as he should be pleased to afford it, and resigning himself patiently, in hopes that the stream would gush from the rock at last, then learned as follows.

"The fact is, Mr. Doubtful, for the last sixty years I have been gradually getting more and more disgusted with that trumpery island behind there, (pointing towards Portsmouth,) till now—when having lived to see one of my friends condemned to be hung, and the other imprisoned, and both, as I think, falsely, I have become more and more convinced that my notion of English jurisprudence is right."

"Ah! let's hear that," said Dick, pricking up his whole soul at the mere sound of that delightful word. "Did you say jurisprudence? let's hear that: what are your notions of English jurisprudence?"

"Why, Mr. Doubtful, I once thought that the greatest crime known to the English constitution was poverty—and so I made haste to get rich. I now find I was wrong—the greatest crime known to the English law, I perceive, is innocence. With this view, it endeavours to make every one as guilty as it can, and, in order not to be out of the fashion, I am going out to mix with West Indian slave-owners, planters and overseers, for the benefit of the best examples in vice; having no doubt that if I live to return to my native country, I shall then and there acquire that honour and emolument which I see the most proficient professors of the art engross."

"Oh! 'pon my word you don't mean to say so; you really don't mean to say you are going out with us to the West Indies—though it does strike me now that I heard something of this before—you don't mean to say that it was so, do you?"

"No, I don't, sir; because, having said it once, I conceive that's quite enough for any one."

"But since you've come to this determination, why did you not endeavour to get into the same ship with your friend Sir Job?"

"Because Sir Job has been such an ass as to take out on his back a blister that he can't help rubbing on all his friend's noses."

"Ah," said Dick, with peculiar satisfaction; "I see, you allude to his wife."

"Who the devil else could I allude to, sir? isn't she the very essence of cantharides and savine ointment, combined? No allusion at all, it's downwright plain speaking, which no one can mistake."

"I quite agree with you, quite," said Dick, delighted at the sympathy which here existed between himself and his companion; "she's not only a blister, but a cat to scratch it afterwards: I only wish"—but what Dick here wished was as strangely interrupted as if he had been

Faustus himself, with Mephistophiles at his elbow, to realise his unformed desire.

The night was beautifully calm, and though no moon was visible, there was still that indistinct glimmer which is seen in the heavens when its new-born mistress is in the early minority of a few days old—the sluggish waters rolled out a black but gleaming surface all around, without discovering any further motion than that made by the slight set of the tide towards the shore, while the air was only broken by the occasional sounding of the ship's bells among the mighty fleet then lying at Spithead, and reposing like giants of the sea upon the liquid field of their innumerable victories.

A few yards off lay the Dromedary, the name of the ship which was to carry Sir Job to his new destination; while the Mary Jane, on board of which Doubtful and Wrynecker were embarked, was anchored almost directly in the Dromedary's wake; and at various distances around were the other ships of the convoy, about to sail at the same time.

The hour was rapidly approaching twelve, and after the last cries of the sentinels had pealed forth with every variety of tone "All's well!"—an unbroken silence was once more renewed upon the waters of Spithead.

As Doubtful was in the very act of uttering his wish, however, as we before said, a confused sound of voices and the rapid motion of feet were heard on board the Dromedary a-head.

"What the devil's in the wind now?" suddenly exclaimed Dick, who was the first to catch these extraordinary sounds.

In a few seconds a voice was distinctly heard shouting "Mary Jane, a-hoy, there!"

"Holloa!" answered one of the seamen who happened to be on the forecastle smoking his pipe.

"Send a boat on board here, quickly," was the reply; "we're sinking."

"What do they say?" cried Doubtful, whose quick ear instantly detected some catastrophe in the dolorous notes which the seamen had but indistinctly heard; and rushing hastily down to the cabin of the captain below, Dick implored him to come on deck, expressing those fears which he entertained for the safety of his friends.

"What!" cried the worthy merchant officer, scarcely aroused from his sleep, "what the devil is the matter? Going down at Spithead in a calm, man alive!—you're dreaming."

"No, I am not; I implore you to come up, and see yourself to the truth of the statement; for if you delay much longer, you will be too late to effect any good."

At this crisis, while the merchantman could not yet believe that the whole affair was anything beyond the inexperienced fright of a landsman, there came distinctly through the captain's scuttle, which happened to be open, the words—

"Mary Jane, a-hoy there! why the devil don't you bear a-hand and send your boats? do you wish to see us go down before your eyes? We've sprung a leak."

"The devil!" cried the captain, to whom this simple explanation had not, it would seem, before occurred; and, rapidly tumbling from his cot, he rushed on deck, even as fast as Doubtful could desire. "All hands, man boats!"—shouting to his crew, through his hands.

While there was yet any assistance to be rendered, Wrynecker was as ready as any one in offering all the service in his power: at last, however, when the crew were shoving off to take up the people of the Dromedary, he called out to one of the men as he went over the ship's side, saying, "There's an old lady on board there, with a hook nose; now a five-pound note to any one of you who shall be able to tell me on his return that he has seen the old termagant go down. A pretty thing,' he remarked, turning to Doubtful, "for a man to be caught on board the same ship with such a devil, after all the efforts we have made to escape from her!"

Notwithstanding, however, this, to all appearances, most ruthless expression of ill will, both Wrynecker and Doubtful lent their best aid towards getting safely on board the parties who were soon crowding the sides of the transport, shouting for assistance from other ships, and experiencing the horrors of seeing their own vessel gradually sink lower and lower in the water every minute. Fortunately for the crew, the guard-boat of the fleet was at this time going her rounds, and, hearing the noise and confusion on board the sinking vessel, pulled straight to the spot, and rendering most effective assistance, managed to clear the last boat-load just as the ship went down.

It may easily be imagined how great was the scene of confusion thus produced;—most of the rescued parties were taken on board the Mary Jane, as being the nearest ship; and when the captain was obliged to protest against any further addition to his crew, the others were dispersed through the several vessels lying in the immediate vicinity.

Fortunately, Sir Job's family having received the alarm together, were taken off in the same boat, and Lady Periwinkle was the first person whom Wrynecker, in his generosity to be useful, helped on board the transport.

"Was there any devil's luck, sure, so bad as that?" whispered Wrynecker to Doubtful, as he handed Lady Periwinkle down the hatchway, in a state of alarm bordering closely upon faintness; "to think of my not only seeing the old griffin safe, but having to lend a hand in the act myself! However, we must grin and bear it." And, with this asseveration, than which nothing could unfortunately be more true, Wrynecker watched Lady Periwinkle descend into the cabin.

Doubtful, with equal care and delight, had quickly borne Julia below, and resigning her per force to the care of the stewardess, fixed his eyes on the loving pair Wrynecker and Lady Periwinkle, while his thoughts wandered deeply into the singular mazes of fortune in which the most unexpected rencontres take place between those who hate one another, at the same time that others who have no existence worth prizing but in a mutual presence and society are forced wide as the poles asunder.

Just at this period of Doubtful's reflections, he heard a long-drawn

sigh, followed by the exclamation—"Misfortunes never come single." "Surely I know that voice," muttered Dick; and instantly turning round, he not only beheld Sir Job Periwinkle standing close behind him, but began to wonder in his own mind how it was he should never have thought of the illustrious patriarch before.

"God bless you, Sir Job!" cried the reporter, "how are you? I hope you have received no hurt in the hurry-scurry of this sudden change of shipping?"

"No, my good fellow," returned the other, with a melancholy smile, "fortunately I have received no hurt, it is true, nor any compensation either, for all my things are gone down on that unfortunate Dromedary's back. Not that I grieve for the loss, but, alas!—there is no time, I suspect, to get any more; more especially if the commodore makes good his intention of taking the convoy to sea in the morning.

"Oh, never mind, never mind," said Doubtful, making use of that very highly-prized, but most enraging, exclamation with which he was accustomed to madden the irritation of every friend he possessed when smarting under any loss, from that of a thimble to a toothpick, a husband or a fortune.

It is a most impertinent matter in any one living to make use of such a phrase. If they intend it for consolation, it is arrogating an infinity of excessive self-importance to imagine that the cool injunction of one man to another—not to mind, can change the sable colour of misfortune, or sweeten the gall of disappointment. If it be not intended for consolation, it is an outrage to intrude any such direction upon our woe.

"Never mind, Sir Job, never mind," said Doubtful; "though it may be very grievous to you, it is very delightful to me; nor does it need proving that as a man cannot look at his own face, he usually considers himself lucky when he can see it in a glass. You must, therefore, try to see your happiness reflected in mine."

"Thank you, Mr. Doubtful, you are exceedingly obliging; but though nothing would give me more delight than seeing you happy, I should still like to enjoy that pleasing vision with a clean shirt on my back and a change of breeches in my portmanteau, a shorn beard, and so forth; but how the devil that's to happen if we go to sea at daybreak, I can't very easily divine, more especially on so long a voyage as ours."

"Never mind, never mind, 'God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,' says Maria."

"For Heaven's sake don't talk to me about Maria now, Mr. Doubtful!" said Sir Job, somewhat testily. "One would think I had enough to do with Lady Periwinkle and Julia, to say nothing of Maria."

"As to Julia, Sir Job, I beg you to trouble yourself no more on that score; I flatter myself if you turn her over entirely to my attention, she won't complain. All that I meant to prove by calling Maria as a witness was this:—that though you lose in one point, you have gained in another."—

"In your happiness?" despondingly and inquiringly interrupted the patriarch.

"Not only in my happiness, but in your own, Sir Job. I allude to this individual;" and Doubtful laid his finger on the back of Wrynecker, who, however, very perversely neither turned nor took any notice whatever of the appeal thus made to him.

"Allude to this individual," muttered Sir Job; "I don't know who he is."

"Dont you! oh, I thought you did."

"No, no, I don't—do you?"

"Why, I thought I had seen his figure before."

"You have quite the advantage of me; for I am sure I never did."

"You're a very ungrateful fellow to say so," suddenly interposed Wrynecker, turning round briskly upon the Patriarch, who exhibited no slight surprise and joy.

"What, Wrynecker, do you mean to say that's absolutely you?"

"Ay, me Rolla, as the play says; though I don't often quote works of that light cast."

"Then as another says, 'All hail,' though I confess you have put off joining till so late, that I almost feared you had been obliged to give up a trip that I am sure was undertaken solely as a kindness, and no ordinary one to me."

"Come, come, Sir Job," says Wrynecker, "don't you begin to flatter yourself too highly, or you may oblige me to confess some much less heroic and praiseworthy design. Perhaps I might——"

"No, no, Wrynecker," interposed the patriarch, "it is unnecessary for you to deny the kindness to which this is owing; for unfortunately for your denial, it is so much of a piece with your whole life, no one who knows you will ever believe any such defence."

"Well, well, if you're going to make a cumulative charge of it nothing can help me but retaining Mr. Doubtful to conduct my defence."

"Why true," said Sir Job, "he is sufficiently addicted to all trespasses of a kind heart over every other consideration, to enter into such a defence, heart and soul."

"Well, perhaps, I didn't exactly mean that."

"What then?" inquired Doubtful, truly curious to know any reason for excelling; "if not that, what was the motive?"

"Simply this," quoth Wrynecker, who had no idea of losing a joke against any one for a want of pressing it home. "I was certain if you took up the defence, very little of that skill, for which you shine so pre-eminently, would suffice to ensure its continuance until the ship reached its destination."

"Ah! very good, very good," said Doubtful, admitting the joke against himself in its full force; "but I think the same object would almost be obtained, if you would consent to charge yourself with six-and-eightpence for every act or deed, indifferently, with which you might be occupied during the suit, at the same time not very singularly forgetting to hand me over my fees; in such a case, I am sure no attorney ever could make up his mind to bring his suit to a termination, even although it were to be in favour of himself."

"Come, Mr. Doubtful, you've hit us hard there, as the children say,

pax! Now let us go below, and see what chance we have of a bed to-night. You and I are all right enough; but what good fortune is to take care of our friend here after all his sorrows I don't know. Where have you put Lady Periwinkle and Julia?"

"As to Lady Periwinkle, I hope she's put herself into the best quarter she can find; if not, I acknowledge my delinquency. To Julia I have already given my own cabin, and I hope she will find that as comfortable as she can desire."

"Stay, Sir Job, there's a difference between——"

"Ay, ay," said Sir Job, laughing, "you need not tell me the reason why."

"Come, gentlemen," interrupted the captain, "I advise you all to turn in as quickly as you can. My orders are quite positive as to sailing in the morning; and you won't find it very pleasant to be roused at daybreak, if you don't get some sleep to enable you to stand it beforehand; therefore I say you had better all turn in."

"An advice I should readily follow," replied the patriarch, "if I knew how; but to confess the truth, it seems very doubtful if I am not only to sleep at all to-night, but whether I shall ever have a chance of sleeping again, or, at least, till the end of the voyage. Where am I to couch myself?"

"If that be all that troubles you," quoth the good-hearted captain, "you may resign your cares. I have already given orders to the ship's steward to prepare some spare hammocks for those whom the sinking of the Dromedary has left in a similar predicament."

Having heartily thanked the captain for this precaution, our party now dispersed below, and were soon locked in that deep sleep which previous excitement rendered not less sweet than rapid.

Before Sir Job retired to rest, he could not help once again reflecting with joy and happiness on that passed conduct during his former prosperity, which, in his adversity, had gained him friends so fast and firm as those around him.

How few who have passed through the same ordeal ever enjoyed the infinite happiness of arriving at a similar result!

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## CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

### PUTTING TO SEA—A SCENE AT SPITHEAD.

Day had scarcely broken on the waters of Spithead, when a ruddy gleam, throwing out its rays on every side of the anchorage, was followed by the loud thunder of a lower-deck gun. In a few seconds another followed from the inner harbour; as first the commander-in-chief of the channel fleet at anchor, and next the admiral of the port, discharged their morning guns.

Before the echoes of the ordnance had ceased, in the stilly air of morning, to resound its mimic thunder along the surrounding shores, a

shrill pipe disturbed the crew on board the ship belonging to the commodore of the convoy, and was followed by the deep bass of the boatswain's voice, "All hands up anchor!" With the true imitativeness of gregarious man, the whistle and the cry seemed to spread from ship to ship throughout the fleet; and as the signal ran, various uncouth sounds seemed growing into life. The black and motionless hulls, rapidly quickened into existence, at first a moving figure appeared upon one part, then a second, and presently a little group, which gradually expanded into a swarming crew; while the before-squared yard gradually pointed to the wind, hands were seen springing up aloft preparatory to loosening sails, and in a few seconds more the notes of the merry pipe were plainly distinguishable to some lively dancing air, to which a true accompaniment was kept by the beating of some thousands of feet on board the ships and vessels, as with one mind they proceeded to run their various anchors up to their bows.

All was now life and animation. The various cries, orders, and commands, the ship's companies competing one with another to see who should be first under weigh, the merchantmen also clanking their heavy windlasses with more slow and progressive activity; first one ship casting and crowding all her sail, and then another following with emulative speed close in her wake; and a few of the traders running foul of each other just for variety. These, together with many other movements of boats, vessels, and men, all crowding on the surface of one roadstead, with a bright morning sun rising behind, and giving the last touch of vividness to the picture, made it a scene of extraordinary life and beauty; though many there were at that time spectators, on whom it fell with little or no interest, and among this number we may fairly include a few of the unhappy-looking junior midshipmen, who, aroused thus early from their rest, would have seen no beauty in the vale of Tempe, if purchased at a price to their aching eyelids so costly and so dear.

Such was the scene that accompanied the putting to sea of one of the largest convoys ever known to leave Spithead for the West Indies, and certainly nothing could ever be more dissimilar than this auspicious beginning, and that speedy termination which many of them found to this voyage.

Doubtful, Sir Job, Wrynecker, and Julia had all been tempted by the novelty of the scene, and the beauty of the day, to rise and witness the operation we have attempted to describe, and certainly nothing could exceed their delight at beholding so gorgeous a spectacle, nor anything more flattering and prosperous than the auguries they drew of their forthcoming voyage. How far these were right the course of our tale will show.

Mankind would be enabled to bear their sorrows with an infinitely-greater share of fortitude, were they but aware how frequently the delights most fair and prized turn to the bitterest curses, and the misfortunes most deplored lead to the most desirable results. And the truth of this observation we may trace in almost every situation of life; from the lamented nobleman who takes pains to select as his valet the

wretch at whose hands he is subsequently to meet assassination, to the criminal whose career of crime has in former times been checked and punished only to conduct him to a land where fortune and regained integrity spring from the detestation and punishment inflicted by his fellows.

As soon as the stately men-of-war had led the way round to the back of the Isle of Wight, with the merchantmen rapidly following, according to the best speed that each could muster, thus somewhat deteriorating from the grandeur of the previous sight, Sir Job and his companions began to revert to those matters of worldly interest which each considered as most engrossing; and amongst the rest, Sir Job commenced the most pathetic lamentations over his lost kit.

In the first burst of his enthusiasm he had entirely forgotten his present destitution; but this speedily returning, he, in vain, demanded of the captain how he should provide himself with a refit, and now was informed, to his horror, that the only existing chance of once more making himself decent, depended upon the convoy being driven into some port down channel by stress of weather; and failing in this, the captain informed Sir Job that he would find great consolation by learning to grin and bear it. To the unfortunate patriarch this was a doctrine, though certainly somewhat novel of its kind, yet one, nevertheless, in which he had already taken the first initiatory lessons. "At any rate," replied he, "I have at least this to console me, that if Fortune punishes me here, she owes me a good turn in some other quarter."

"What," said the captain, "do you think such a blind and aged old hag, as they say Fortune is, ever takes the trouble to keep a regular log of when she does wrong, that she may afterwards do right?"

"If I understand you right, captain, by log I suppose you mean account. Is that so?"

"Why, ay, Sir Job, I believe them much of a muchness; only to my mind log seems more shipshape—for instance, if you owed me a thousand pounds, I should log it down."

"But as I don't, captain, why, thank God, you can't."

"Exactly. I merely meant to show——"

"Ah, precisely, and in that light I understand it, and therefore I must tell you, that I as firmly believe in Fortune keeping a strict account of all the buffets and the blessings she bestows, as I do in the correctness of my own ledgers. In her time she has given me a few kind turns, such as many mortals never meet with; now she is showing me a little of the other side of the picture; and when she has finished with that, I hope she will come round again. But whenever I see a man fortunate for any length of time, I always feel for him, because I know there's a heavy cloud about to break upon his house."

"Well, Sir Job, you being more learned than I am, I can't say I ever observed what you mention; and I should be rather sorry than otherwise for all of us, if your mode of reckoning the longitude in this matter is the right one. The last six voyages I have been, nothing could be more fortunate than they have turned out; whereas you see if you're right, ten to one that this one will be unfortunate."

"I should not be at all surprised, sir," quietly returned Sir Job. "If

what you say is correct about your former voyages, you had better be prepared for the worst in this."

"Well, I must say you're well named Sir Job, but you ought rather to have been one of Job's comforters, thus to damp a man at the outset of a cruise in this way; and as far as I see, I never saw a finer start of any voyage yet; and though I don't want to be disrespectful to you, yet I must say, if it had pleased God to have kept you in your own ship, I should have been better pleased."

"Oh, don't be depressed by anything I've said," quickly added the kind-hearted citizen, intending as he thought to allay the fears of the simple captain. "It is very possible that you may perform this voyage in safety like the rest, and so make it your seventh, while Fortune may reserve all her indignation for the eighth, and so terminate your labours altogether."

"What! do you mean to tell me, that I am to be cast away next time I go to sea, if I should happen to land you safely on shore in this? On my word, sir, I am much obliged to you for the insinuation, at all events!" and hastily pulling his cap down over his eyes, and muttering some oaths which Sir Job did not distinctly hear, the disheartened captain strode forward to the forecastle, without giving the patriarch any opportunity of explaining his ill-omened doctrine of, and concerning the equity of, fate.

"'Pon my honour," said Sir Job, somewhat disconcerted, to Wrynecker, who had been a silent, but highly diverted, spectator of this scene; "'pon my honour one would almost imagine that sailors were more peculiarly superstitious than other people."

"Why, Sir Job, have you lived so long and don't know that yet?"

"Why, I confess I have heard of something of the sort before, but I have always treated it as a gross libel on one of the finest portions of the British character."

"Lord love you! To use an original expression, a compass-needle isn't truer to the pole than these tarry-breeched gentry are to every species of nonsense that affects the imagination by terror and superstition. That fellow's gone away, you may depend upon it, with his mind made up that you are a second Jonas: any ill that happens to the ship will infallibly be set down to your door; and if you can find a whale to creep into, so much the better. You did stand a chance before of getting the captain to help you out with your kit. Now, if I am not much mistaken, he would as soon think of lending his breeches to the devil."

"I am sorry to hear it," said poor Sir Job gravely; "and under such disastrous circumstances my only consolation will be that of my namesake of old, namely, 'Naked came I into the world, and naked I must go out of it;'" and with this last attempt at self support, the patriarch descended with Wrynecker to avail himself of the offer which the latter made of placing his toilet apparatus at the service of his bereaved companion.

## CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

### THE WRONGS OF ST. DOMINGO.

Leaving our friends to whatever fortune might be in store for them upon the open sea, our tale now reverts to the chances that befel Nora and Eveline at St. Domingo. The island which bears this name, in addition to those of Hayti and Hispaniola, is one equally remarkable, valuable, and interesting, both from the largeness of its extent and the singular originality of history and example which it offers to the world. Originally discovered to Europeans by Columbus, who landed on it towards the end of the fifteenth century, and remarkable as the first colonisation by that illustrious voyager within the limits of America, the name of Hayti was that of which Columbus found it in possession among the natives; and in honour of the country to which he was so much indebted, he gave to it the title of Hispaniola, or little Spain. On the return of Columbus to Europe, he left in command of the colony his brother Bartholomew, who founded on the southern coast the city St. Domingo; which, becoming the capital of the island, has since given its name to the whole of this remarkable, though petty empire.

The cruel tyranny of the Spanish colonists, intent only on enriching their own coffers at any expense of the conquered natives, and anxious to distil even the blood of their victims into gold, enacted so unsparing and foolish, because unbearable, a code of labour laws, that by disease and premature decay the original race of Hayti, in the space of a single lustre, had nearly all expired beneath the avaricious yoke of their inhuman tyrants. Too indolent to supply, by their own labour, the posts of those whom their merciless policy had exterminated, the European colonists enticed forty thousand natives of the Bahama isles to those shores which their inhumanity had already desolated; but the same love of slavery which had swept away the original population which, on its first discovery by Columbus, averaged between one and three millions of people, found in the fresh draught from the Bahamas no opportunity for the amelioration of a system so destructive, but simply fresh victims to destroy. Before the following century had well-nigh half expired, not two hundred of all these unhappy creatures remained in existence.

As the extent of the island is upwards of four hundred English miles in length, and two hundred and seventy in breadth, it may be easily supposed how farcical, if it were not horrible, would be the condition of such a land with some hundred and sixty people to cultivate it. If there were one quality which, more than any other, appears to characterise the Spaniards in history, it would seem to be that of being —The irreformable. As a nation, no lesson seems to teach them—no experience to instruct—no calamity to amend. Possessed of incomparably the finest island in the whole West Indies, they had introduced into it the culture of the sugar-cane from the Canary islands; and after enslaving and torturing to death by excessive work both the original

inhabitants, and those they had imported into it, their idleness was allowed to prove an entire bar to the slightest exertion of their own, all culture ceased, and every prospect of utility was annihilated.

In order that we may have a fair view of the value of this gem, which Spain first seized from its avarice, destroyed in its cruelty, and lost by its indolence, it may be as well to take a slight view of the productions which St. Domingo presents for the cultivation of man. Of large extent, and possessing harbours of sufficient capacity to trade with the whole world, situated in a position that would make it accessible to every empire on the globe, its mountains present a moderate and consistent temperature of about seventy degrees, while alternate land and sea breezes, which set in regularly with the rise and set of sun, moderate the great heat, that render its plains some of the most fertile upon the globe.

Among its productions are found the most exquisite mahogany, and the finest satin-wood in the world. Vanilla and every inferior species of West Indian vegetable produce are abundant—the cotton-tree included. Among its productions in the animal world, swine, horses, and oxen, early introduced from Europe, ranged the hills in wild abundance, indigo, coffee, and the sugar-cane, were among the cultivations with which art had been assisted by a prolific soil.

Such was the land which imbecility and the worst excesses of slavery had reduced to a mere wilderness; when, in the middle of the seventeenth century, the French erected a small colony on the west-end of the island; and, by treaties and perseverance, in the course of another hundred years were all but the nominal possessors of the whole of Hayti. The population of the Spaniards being less than one-third of the Gallic inhabitants of the island—slaves on either side included in this calculation—French industry and enterprise had rapidly converted the sluggishness which before reigned in St. Domingo into commercial activity, prosperity, and wealth; and when towards the end of the eighteenth century, the terrible revolution of Paris involved the whole globe in its attendant miseries, the island of St. Domingo was annually importing into Europe many millions of sterling value in coffee, cotton, cocoa, indigo, and sugar.

The torch of popular liberty once lit in France, the island of Hayti, as may naturally be surmised, was but a depot of combustibles, which its earliest scintillations could not fail to explode. Falling greatly into the error of the earliest Spaniards, the French had also treated the Haytians with a marked degree of that insolence and cruelty from which no state of slavery can ever be thoroughly exempt. Considering their slaves only as so much animated property, the slightest sympathy with them as human beings was denied. The black population had long outnumbered the white tyrants, in a proportion of nearly twelve to one; and the former, with all the impatience of wrong, no sooner perceived the power of the multitude prevail in Paris, than they resolved to follow the example by freeing themselves in the colony. With this view a general discontent created insurrections in numerous portions of the island; and though the blacks had not at the period of our tale concerted, or rather executed, any general rise, still the perpetual small

outbreaks in different directions already indicated a coming storm; while, to add to the confusion, the white rulers of the island had not even unanimity to offer them a shield from the effects of that tyranny which they had so mercilessly wielded when the political atmosphere promised security for their government, and impunity for their crimes.

Among other enormities at which humanity shudders, it is stated by some writers of this period, that proprietors were found in the island sufficiently inhuman to throw into burning furnaces slaves who had offended them, while the government was too weak or too iniquitous to bring such murderers to an account.

But for such further description as may be necessary for the understanding of our story, we must leave our characters to speak for themselves.

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## CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

### SUNRISE IN THE TROPICS.

"Ah, ah, mon ami, what you shall think of a West Indian sunrise?" exclaimed the voice of Monsieur De Passoa, calling from a garden filled with oranges, pine-apples, palm-trees, and other tropical productions, to Eveline, who sat mournfully gazing at the prospect before her.

"What can I think," replied she, starting with surprise at finding herself thus observed, "but that a West Indian sunrise, as you term it, is one of the most glorious subjects of contemplation in nature?"

Built on the gradual rise of a small mountain for the sake of the cool temperature and healthy breeze which this position ensured, Eveline's room faced towards the east, where the sun had only yet risen a short distance above the horizon, and the stretch of country that intervened between the coast and the house in which she had slept, was lit up with all the brilliant golden tints which the horizontal rays of the sun literally streamed over it.

Not a house, hamlet, or plantation but this searching and beautiful light displayed to perfect view. The dews of the morning lingered on every leaf, and glistened like the diamond with prismatic colours. The shape of every intervening obstacle appeared in the cool and refreshing tints of azure, varying from the lightest cobalt to the deepest blue; while in the far distance of the horizon, over which they had been so lately borne, hung like a deliciously transparent veil—here melting into the softest outline, there throwing back in burnished gold the image of the sun—the gentlest cloudlets that the sky can bear. Now slightly ruffling the crystal seas, the morning breeze came freshly to the cheek like the breath of life itself; then, as the cat's-paw died away, the ocean remained still and placid as a mirror in which the Deity might contemplate the beauty of his own handiwork the heavens. Upon the bosom of the sea near the shore lay the line-of-battle ship in which our friends had arrived; her straight lines, beautifully tapered masts, and regularly painted hull, reposing on her own image, like some vast sea-bird of the clime, and putting into beautiful, but subservient contrast, the work of man with that of his Creator.

As Eveline gazed forth upon the scene before her, and then looked back to the high inland mountains, whose glistening tops peeped out in dazzling whiteness against the deep blue of the heavens behind them, their salient points touched with purple and gold, and draperied half way by the transparent mists that night was rapidly rolling back from their giant proportions, she thought she had at last arrived in some blessed paradise, where even the sense of her own sufferings would melt away from her remembrance, and the atmosphere prove too sublimated to allow the slightest sorrow, much less cruelty or persecution, to exist within its influence; but these feelings, which Nature prompted, man was speedily about to correct; though it is a melancholy subject of contemplation to view all the capabilities of happiness that Heaven has placed within his reach, and then to mark how he has distorted them into opportunities for the exercise of every baleful passion, the perpetration of every crime!

"How did you get down there, Monsieur De Passoa?" demanded Eveline, envying her French friend the privilege of enjoying the delights of a walk amid the beauties of such a garden in the cool hour of sunrise.

"You will find a little staircase to the left of your room," replied the son of chivalry, who felt an indescribable sort of pleasure in the society of Eveline, which he ascribed to the gallantry that the latter had displayed in saving the lives of himself and Captain Simpson.

Thanking him for the information he had given her, she quitted her window, and in a few moments joined the disciple of Mars in his walk below. With the first impulse of a young and intelligent mind, Eveline began to seek that information relative to the state of the island in which she now found herself, which when on board the seventy-four she had hardly thought it worth while to direct her attention, since, such had been the quick succession of her trials and misfortunes, that she hardly credited her destination would lead her to any spot until she found she had arrived on it.

De Passoa, who had before visited the colony, and knew indifferently well every particular respecting its present position, was able at once to give her much accurate information, from which she soon became convinced how entirely she had mistaken the history of the place in supposing it to be the abode of either peace or happiness. Before, however, De Passoa's explanation of its actual position had proceeded much further than the first brief outline, they were interrupted by a powerful but well-known voice bawling out, "A-hoy there! Captain Passover, where are ye? be so good as to make your number, and give us your bearing, the undergrowth is so thick here in these latitudes that a man can scarcely make out his own convoy."

"Ah, ah! Monsieur Sampson, is that you?" returned the Frenchman, at once recognising the voice of the hailer, and giving him instructions how to reach the spot where the voices of our two friends had already attracted his attention. In a few minutes the worthy seaman came up, or, as he termed it, "joined company," blowing like a leviathan that has just ascended from the deep; and, applying his handkerchief to his forehead, with considerable energy, said, "Good morning to you, gentlemen; after all the gales we have had to weather lately, there seems some

comfort in a bit of a berth like this; don't you think so, Captain Sampson? How is it we stand towards one another now, after all the changes we have had backwards and forwards? Hang me, I scarcely know whether I am my own man or anybody else's. How is it, sir; are you my prisoner, or am I yours?"

"Ah, Captain Sampson, these were nice distinctions; but we do not need much to consider: if I guess rightly, we are soon found to be both prisoners of another power."

"The devil we are!" cried Simpson, starting, "how do you make out that; for, if those chaps who you took us on board consider me as a prisoner of war, I don't see how that can affect you, who are their countryman?"

"My good friend, it was sometimes more difficult to see effects than to feel them, and this you shall find to be our case."

"Why, what sort of an outlandish place is this we have got into! I thought at first, by the cut of its jib, it was a good snug port, with plenty of rum and backy. Do you mean to say there are cannibals here, Captain Passover, that there's such danger to both of us?"

"Ah, ah! my brave garçon," turning to Eveline, "Capitaine Sampson he think that a cannibal is the worst thing in the creation he shall fear."

"Why, odds bobs, my old cadger, what would you have worse? do you know what I mean by cannibals—I mean gentlemen what eat their prisoners of war alive and kicking;—what would you have worse than that?"

"Oh that, Captain Sampson *ce n'est rien*—that is mere christianity—*un peu sévère;* that is von little bit austere perhaps, but noting to compare with these damn niggers."

"Why, what the devil do these fellows mean to do with us, then," demanded Simpson, in evident perturbation—"we are only prisoners of war, take it at the worst, I fancy?"

"What they did do with their prisoners of war I should not pretend to say, but with their bosom friends they think nothing of roasting them alive first, and eating them afterwards."

"Whew!" cried the alarmed Simpson, with a long whistle of surprise, "cannibals is a fool to them—such a delicate chap as this," giving Eveline a poke with his elbow, "they *might* take to munching just to divert the hunger of 'em, but once they come to grub such old chaps as you and I, they will find us d—n tough on the tooth, or they'll be as much mistaken."

"*Oui, oui, certainement*, there shall be but little doubt of it—but these niggers shall have only one good point about them, their teeth, so you was expect little consolation on that score."

The whole of this conversation was carried on with so much apparent gravity by Simpson and Passoa, that Eveline, who shuddered while she listened, scarcely knew whether to consider them as speaking in joke or earnest; and when on the very point of putting the question which would elucidate this important fact, a slight rustle in a small grove of plantains attracted their attention; and, to the horror of the trio, two large glaring eyes were seen twinkling close to the ground. "There's a tiger going to make a spring on us!" said Eveline, in the first moment of alarm, starting back.

"No, Massa, me no tiger," said a laughing, and not unmusical voice, from amidst the thicket, "me only Jupiter Ammon, de poor nigger; good morning, Massa," addressing De Passoa, whom with true negro quickness he recognised as a Frenchman, and believed to belong to the rulers of the island.

"Good morning, Jupiter Ammon: have you got up so early to see that the sun does its duty," demanded Eveline.

"No Sar, poor nigger!—he blidge to get up now because he love him, massa; do him work. You have many slave, massa?"

"Oh, no, Jupiter Ammon, I've no slaves, I'm what you may call a prisoner of war myself."

"Ah, ah, sir, you prisoner de war? then you have one dam hard time of it: perhaps the grand massa there he have many slave," pointing to Simpson.

"Oh, no, he's a prisoner of war, like myself."

"Poor old gentlemans—he have worser luck before he have better."

"None of your clack, mister Jupiter Ammon, or I'll break your nigger head."

"Ah, ah, poor Jupiter Ammon!—he have soft head, his head broken twenty times a-day, massa; him nigger head like cocoa berry—all alike massa: never mind, break de nigger head—him nigger have no feeling;" and Jupiter Ammon grinned from ear to ear, showing his great white teeth, with a look of happy indifference at Simpson's threat, and yet a cunning smile of shrewd intelligence withal, that gave a silent utterance to many things.

"Massa mustn't talk of breaking niggers' heads any more, now."

"Why not, you black thief?" demanded Simpson. Jupiter Ammon grinned again, and then, with a very knowing motion towards his own pimple, he replied, "Him nigger's head growing so hard now, they bruise massa's hand in touching. You ever pull one prickly pear, massa?" and quick as thought the negro took up one of the hoes which they use in cultivating the cane, and which was leaning against a hedge of aloes—and, with quick eye and single blow, he chopped off a large piece of the species of the cactus to which he had alluded, and which contained amid the innumerable prickles it boasted, a small and circular green pod, surrounded with small countless thorns; pointing to this object as he held it with peculiar care, Jupiter Ammon favoured the company with another grin of peculiar magnitude, and said, "Him very nice fruit, massa, suppose you pick him." Simpson immediately put out his hand to seize the lauded pear, but before he could detach it from its stem, some hundreds of the sharp guardians of its refreshing pulp ran into his hand.

With a characteristic oath of anger and impatience Simpson gave utterance to some words of dangerous import in Jupiter Ammon's ear, and darted forward to seize that distinguished god by his woolly protuberance. Jupiter, omniscient both of the intention and the result, dodged rapidly aside, and gave only his shoulder to the gripe of his adversary, while the latter, taking the instalment as the best catch he could make under the existing difficulty, prepared to pummel the delinquent for his sins. In an instant, however, Jupiter extricated his oily

skin from the grasp of his antagonist, and laughing heartily at the trick he had played, retreated to a short distance, saying, "There, massa, you have taste the prickly pear; nigger's head growing very like the prickly pear now-a-days. Massa have much more comfort in letting poor nigger alone."

At first Simpson was inclined in his anger to pursue the head of the heathen deities for daring to take this liberty with him, but Passoa having intercceded and assured the rude but kind-hearted captain that nothing more than a little practical joke was meant, Simpson showed such signs of moderating his anger that Jupiter Ammon from afar thus addressed him:

"Massa, suppose you let nigger's head alone, Jupiter Ammon soon take thorns out of massa's hand."

"Very will, you black thief," growled Simpson, "come and do it; I promise I won't touch you. Odds hang it, I begin to think, Captain Passover, that cannibals is fools to such as these; run Jupiter, jump along;" and, surrendering his mighty paw to Jupiter's attention, he was freed from the annoyance of the prickles with a degree of ease that to him seemed magical.

While the black was thus busily engaged, Simpson again addressed him on the subject. "I say, blackee, what did you mean by that rigmarole of yours, about niggers' heads?"

Jupiter Ammon looked up at this question very knowingly at each of the faces of every individual of the party, and then directing his attention to the hand which was under his care, replied, "Oh, massa, poor Jupiter Ammon hab no meaning—poor ignorant nigger—him neber hab no meaning—him only talky for talky—all de words come by accident."

"None of your lies, you black rascal. I know you had some particular meaning in that confounded lump of green thorn bush. So now let's know what the devil it was."

The same look of intelligence which Eveline had before observed here passed over the features of the black, and, looking up to Passoa, he replied, "Monsieur, here he have one large estate—he keep many nigger slaves—he know poor nigger well—he tell you poor Jupiter Ammon hab no meaning."

"No, my good friend," said De Passoa in French, "I have neither slave nor estate;" and in a few words he briefly explained the situation in which they all stood.

"Massa have neither nigger nor estate, and yet, massa, a Frenchman!" as if he could scarcely believe in the possibility of any native of France, standing upon the soil of St. Domingo, unsullied by the cruelties that had made even their name a matter of loathing to the unfortunate race they had so oppressed.

"Not I," replied De Passoa in answer to this doubt; "I have already told you what brought us all here, and yonder lies the ship that conveyed us," pointing to the seventy-four in the bay.

Some minutes Jupiter continued to look at this object, as if weighing in his own mind the truth or falsehood of the story that had been told him; and then still hesitating to give his confidence, demanded, with an abstracted air, and as if he had totally abandoned the other topic,—

"Did massa see you come down into de garden dis morning?" pointing to the house.

"Massa, who the devil is your massa?" gruffly inquired Captain Simpson; "is it necessary that a man should have a massa every time he picks his teeth or puts one leg before another? We have seen no massa since we came here; we were sent under guard of some sodger-like looking chaps who received us the moment we landed. Who is your massa? I should like to have a little talk with him about the latitude and longitude of his berth here, which seems a devilish snug one, and ask him what he finds in his instructions to prevent us from shipping ourselves for a passage home on the first opportunity."

While Simpson was making this reply, the attention of the negro seemed directed to some object far off at sea, and his face wore all the gravity of the deepest abstraction. No sooner, however, had Simpson done speaking, than the former look of cunning and drollery resumed its place upon Jupiter's image, and silently retreating a few steps behind the shadow of the plantain grove from which he had just emerged, and, making a sign of caution as if fearful of being overheard, the other three, anxious to gain every possible information with respect to their situation, stole a furtive glance back towards the house to see they were not watched, and quickly followed their illustriously-named guide.

As soon as Jupiter imagined that his comrades were beyond the reach of ordinary hearing, he gave utterance to a long low laugh which seemed to afford him particular satisfaction, and then remarked—"If massa tink he get away—massa dam happy—but, if massa do get away, massa dam clever, and happy too. Massa King Louis man, or massa republican man?"

"The devil may take both for me," Simpson bluntly replied; "what I say is, every man for himself, and God for us all. No more of your humbugging, master nigger; one would think I didn't ask you so very hard a question when I merely inquired what you meant by that prickle-plant, that you must take a fellow into a back wood here, and make as many bones about answering as if you were going to open some astounding information about the gunpowder plot. I say, Blackee, tell us now what did you mean by it."

"Oh, massa, it was only poor nigger's hallegoly," returned Jupiter.

"Poor nigger's what?" demanded Simpson, who had the most pious abhorrence of any word in the language which should dare to exceed two syllables.

"Only poor nigger's hallegoly," repeated Jupiter Ammon, who had as proportionate an affection for fine words as the other had an abhorrence of them.

"Jupiter, you must not address such fine language to this stout gentleman, he is only a poor ignorant English captain, and not competent to understand it," said De Passoa, in French.

"Ah! is it so?" replied blackee, with a most magnificent smile of compassion, and intense delight; and, speaking in the same language, "if that is the case, Jupiter will pity him;" and, had he really possessed the thunder-bolts of the Grecian god he could not have said this with more impressive grandeur of forbearance."

"What the devil are you saying in that outlandish lingo?" demanded Simpson, who saw the pair turning their glances upon himself, and spoke with all the jealousy of a man who thought himself about fifty thousand fold superior to both of them combined.

"I was merely informing this poor negro that he shall trust you," answered De Passoa, who would as soon have tried giving Simpson a knock-down blow as have conveyed to him a literal translation of his communication to Jupiter.

"Ay, thank ye—you're very good; and just tell the nigger not to use such outlandish terms. I've had quite enough of two-deckers lately on board that French craft yonder, without having them launched at me all of a heap by a thief of a nigger who does not know how to spell any one word that he utters."

"Sar, you very contemptible to me, I think," replied Jupiter, firing up, and meaning that he was very contemptuous.

"I no accustom to such language, sar. I'm a member of de Republique of young France;" then altering his tone, "but I compassionate you; that was what my hallegoly meant if you could understand it. Nigger's day coming, sar; you see de sun!—he rise in de heaven—that sun young France; nigger man soon be free as you."

"Hang me if I understand such lingo as this!" replied Simpson, perfectly perplexed, and talking to his friend.

"Ob course not," said the other, "ob course, you white man never understand nothing but breaking poor nigger's shin, breaking nigger's head, and breaking poor nigger's nose—but wait—one little time nigger say to white man, massa, you look to your own dam tic head massa: you mind your own shin, and wrap your dam nose in one good silk handkerchief, or else him nigger pull him on every side."

"Ah, ah! it shall be coming to that?" demanded Passoa. The negro gave a significant nod, and said nothing.

"I thought," rejoined the Frenchman, "that the island was in a state of greater quiet and repose now than it has been for years."

"Ah, you tought so, massa; but too many cook him spoil de broth—him make broth boiling hot in dat city, I can tell you," pointing in the direction of St. Domingo.

"What do you mean by too many cooks?" asked Eveline, who, in the excited looks of the negro thought she detected some coming evil, and, having already had enough of misfortunes, was anxious, if possible, to take them by the forelock.

"Too many cooks, massa—what you call 'em, too many party?"

"Why, I suppose, that is the name we should give; but how many parties are there in the island—only the black population and white, are there?"

"Massa, him bery young, bery young, massa, indeed. Gooramighty say with you only two party; the debel and the white man. Dey say," counting on his fingers—"one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten—twelve—and all try bery hard to cut him other throat."

"Twelve parties in this island, Jupiter, how shall you make that out? you shall have to make half-a-dozen yourself to make up that number."

"No, massa, dem all ready made to hand:—first, there is the black and de white, that's two parties. Blacks are divided into slave niggers and free niggers;—slave niggers, they can't say him life his own; free nigger can say him life his own, but noting more; that makes three parties: then de whites are divided into the great officers—army and civil officers, that makes four. Then, again, comes de white merchants, doctors, lawyers, and other debils children, call 'em priests."

"Come, come, Master Jupiter Ammon, you mustn't abuse the pastors of the church, or you shall be a heretic."

"No, no, massa, me no hedgestic—me true Barbadian born—come here with my massa who die of the yellow fever, and I no able to get back out of this dam island; that's what you call a free nigger. I am a free nigger, not a hedgstick."

"Ah, ah! then, perhaps, you shall be a Protestant?"

"Oh, es, massa, ob course I am a Protestant; me bery good Protestant: me only have five wives, and go to church every Sunday when I am near the city."

"But there is no Protestant church in St. Domingo, is there?" demanded Eveline, unable to abstain from laughing at the heathen mythologist's notion of a good Protestant.

"Oh, massa, that hab nothing to do with it; Protestant church neber trouble Jupiter Ammon;—him go to church—him go to church, Gooramighty him never fidget himself about such picaninny trifles."

"Very good, very good," said Eveline, unwilling to hear any more of what appeared to her such very questionable theology, "so now, Jupiter Ammon, proceed with your description."

"Well den, massa, de lawyers, doctors, and priests, they make a fifth party;—den come de *petits blancs*, as they call them; dat is, de little shopkeeper, who give demselves more airs than all de rest, put 'em together, dey make a sixth: and now, since young France he come to life in Paris, he divide 'em all into King's men and Republican men, and every one him hate de other—that makes twelve parties: and every one him hate de other worse than poisson."

"And which party, Jupiter, do you belong to?"

"I laugh at dem all, massa. I see dem all fools and rogues together, not know what dey want, and all fighting to get what dey won't like when they have it. Sad times coming in this island, massa; him close at hand; true Barbadian born; him wish he could get back to his own island—cut him cable, and make sail."

"Now you begin to talk a little sense," broke in Captain Simpson, who, as soon as he heard a touch of his own vernacular, thought it very fit and proper that he should assert his dignity by joining in the conversation.

"Whereabouts, my boy, do you expect the squall to burst from?"

"Toussaint L'Ouverture, massa."

"What the devil quarter of the compass does that place lie in?"

"Him no place, massa."

"Him no place, you nigger—what do you mean by that?"

"Toussaint L'Ouverture a great man, massa."

"Why, do you mean to say there is a grand admiral in these parts then?"

"No, massa, no admiral, Toussaint L'Ouverture, a great black chief, a general."

"Oh, is that the chap? what sort of a fellow is he then, that you seem to think so much of him? If he is only a general, I suppose he must be a sodger, and if that's the case, a few stout blue-jackets will soon put him to rights. What sort of a fish is he? has he much house?"

"He dam pious to talk, massa, but him perfect debil to do. He call himself a bery good man; never read any book but de Bible; but Jupiter Ammon tink him one of de greatest rogues outside the hot place below," and Jupiter pointed his finger significantly towards the earth. "Where is he now Jupiter not know nor care; where he should be Jupiter very glad to hear."

"But is he not, as the black chief, the person who is fighting for the benefit of the negroes?" demanded Eveline.

"Him say he fight for de nigger, massa; if so he bery good man. I say he fight for himself—we shall see; he tinks as much of human life as Jupiter Ammon would of a cockroach. But, sir, him a bery powerful man, though I no like to talk too much of him. Toussaint L'Ouverture very long ears; him hear two hundred mile, and tink noting of it."

"The devil he would, nigger! Come, I think you must be cramming us?"

"Jupiter means he shall have spies everywhere," said De Passoa, interpreting the negro's metaphor.

"Hush, hush," cried Jupiter, lifting up his finger, and bending down his head in an attitude of intense listening, "I hear some one coming."

All parties now lent their attention, but declared their utter inability to distinguish any sound whatever. The spot on which they stood commanded the high road approaching the plantation, within which the house was inclosed; and though all Jupiter's companions declared he was mistaken, he re-asserted his conviction with still stronger emphasis. After the lapse of a few moments, the eyesight of our friends bore witness to the extraordinary accuracy of the negro's hearing, when they beheld a rude kind of litter stop at the plantation gate; and while the negroes who had borne it carefully set their burden down, a figure leaped out from the inside, habited in the dress of a sailor.

"Who the devil's this!" exclaimed Simpson, who seemed to take more particular interest in the arrival than any one beside.

"Why, I declare," said Eveline, "it looks exactly like Spanker, whom we left sick on board the line-of-battle ship last night; and yet as he was too ill to get out of his cot, one should hardly see how that should be."

"'Tis him, though," said Simpson, now distinguishing his old shipmate, as he drew a little nearer. "And some new misfortune has happened, that's more. Don't you see he's walking with a game leg, where that confounded block fell on his uncle. Let's meet him."

## CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

### THE HEROINE IN DURESS.

"SEE, he is waving his hat," said Eveline, pointing to the newcomer.

"Ay," returned Simpson; "and as sure as we are standing here, there's some new game in the wind, for the devil a word he utters; I say there you nigger, Jupiter Ammon, or what the devil you call yourself, run and show him up to us."

"Something the matter do you say, Captain Sampson," repeated Eveline; "what do you apprehend as likely to be the matter?"—her mind instantly reverting to the unprotected situation in which they had been obliged to leave Nora, and yet not liking to hint one word of misfortune in such a quarter, fearing lest it should be confirmed.

"Lord knows what's the matter, sir, there's something in the wind I dare say—perhaps Mrs. Archdeacon has got the mulligrubs, and has sent Spanker on shore with the awful fact, because she knows he is particularly lame, and it may do him harm to come; however, we shall soon hear the whole report of it; here comes our old shipmate close aboard of us,"—as Spanker, conducted by Jupiter Ammon, made his way towards the conclave so busily engaged in speculating on his mission.

"What's the matter, my boy, what's the matter, Spanker?" demanded all hands on his coming within speaking distance, for then it became evident from the aspect of his rude countenance that something far more serious had occurred on board the seventy-four than any internal discomposure of even Mrs. Archdeacon.

"What's the matter?" grumbled Spanker in return.

"Oh, as usual, the devil to pay, and no pitch hot, as might be expected, where one has to deal with a set of infernal Frenchmen, asking your pardon, Captain Passover, for speaking the truth so boldly; but the fact is, you are the only one of your country which was ever worth a chew of baccy, so there's no use in making any concealment of it. Here, sir, this letter's for you"—turning to Eveline—"your young lady is in a bit of trouble at present, but I hope we shall soon be able to get her clear out of that. So I trusts your honour won't go to concern yourself too much about it; one must expect these things when one falls in with the Frenchmen, as I said before."

"Trouble, Spanker!" said Captain Simpson in great amazement; "why what trouble can the young lady have fallen into since we left the ship last night?"

"Oh, not much," replied the kind-hearted seaman, giving them a wink to be quiet, and motioning them on one side, where, as soon as they were out of hearing, he added—"the fact is, Captain Simpson,

that thief of a fellow, the first-lieutenant you left on board there, no sooner sees the lady's husband's back turned, as he thinks, but he makes love to the lady, thinking himself, no doubt, a most captiwating sort of chap, while she, you see, telling him plump and plain that he was no go, they came to a bit of a scrimmage, and he threatens to confine her till she alters her mind; however, women are such cunning creaturs, they're sure to outmatch all hands, and though the lady herself is locked up in her cabin, she contrived by her servant to send me this bit of a line, with a message to take it on shore right away to her husband; to be sure I was unfortunately in the sick list, and hardly knew how to put one foot afore the other, but in such a case one can't very well be backward, so I have done the best I could, and here I am; now the question is, what the devil is to be done? I got away from the ship this morning on the sly, as it might be, having found a jolly-boat lying astern, and taking the liberty of using it without any particular sort of leave; 'twill never do to let that young lady be bothered by such a chap as that Frenchman, more especially as she has the good sense—in course—not to like the fellow."

"Why," said Simpson, "there's no difficulty in managing this, I should think; all that we have to do is to represent it to the authorities, and insist that she is sent on shore."

"Oh, my good Captain Sampson, where do you fancy yourself?—Did you think you shall be in England with what you call your habeas corpus, and that you can't so easily manage this matter? *Morbleu!* you will find it a very different thing in a rascally managed French colony, where each knave in office is more corrupt than the other—not I believe that the nation of the colony makes much difference; by all I shall ever hear, I am grieved for this—the dam ras-caal—I would think that at last all the poor beautiful young lady's troubles were over, then to think of this happening. Ah, I did think he was too sweet upon that lady all de voyage out; but I did not like to disturb the peace of mind of her husband, poor young man.—Well, we shall do the best we can."

Just as the worthy Frenchman had come to this determination, Eveline joined them to take their opinion on the best course to be pursued: the whole conclave were soon, however, unanimous in holding that an appeal should be made to the authorities of the place before any harsher steps were taken.

"Ah, massa, you may spare yourself de trouble," said Jupiter Ammon, with a knowing shake of the head.

"Why, Jupiter, do you say so?" demanded Eveline, who, wiser and less self-opiniated than the rest, wished to hear the reasoning of one who, from his long residence in the island, ought, as she conceived, to know something about the result of such an application.

"Why do you think I may spare myself the trouble of applying to the authorities?"

"Because, massa, you hab too much justice on your side—suppose you hab no justice, den the government do everything for you—government him hate people who hab justice on their side; if they once

listen to justice in this island, nuffing else to do—no maky de money —no fishy, no shooty—no do anything else. Government laugh at you, massa, for asking dem."

This was a very comfortable prospect for Eveline, even though only a bosom friend, and not the husband, of the party so cruelly used; but unfortunately for Jupiter's advice, there was so much of the aphorism in it, that the sarcastic bearing which it took overbore any appearance of sound judgment that it otherwise would have displayed; and this making Eveline believe that Jupiter spoke rather from some disappointed feeling than from any mature knowledge of the fact, determined her unfortunately to adhere to the resolution she had previously taken of appealing to the powers of the law for Nora's relief, before adopting any other course. With this intention the whole party retired into the interior of their quarters, to acquaint the officer who had charge of them, with their wishes. When Jupiter Ammon heard of this resolve, he smiled in a melancholy way, and as if more grieved than hurt at the want of reliance such a resolution betrayed.

"Of course, poor nigger, he neber know anything, but white man, him know a great deal," added Jupiter with a knowing wink—"when it is too late."

While our friends went to ascertain what assistance they could render to Nora in this emergency, we will take the liberty of glancing at our heroine's letter, and thereby ascertaining whether the danger in which she was placed was greater or less than Spanker in his rude way had described it. The letter ran thus:—

"Filled as my mind was with forebodings even at the short parting which threatened us yesterday afternoon, I could not have believed it possible that the lapse of so few hours would have proved the innate truth that gave force to its anguish—where are our trials to find a termination? Did I not know the mute cowardice of the strongest heart when death is really threatening us, I could almost imprecate the hour that delivered me from our late dangers. You will scarcely believe me when I inform you that the cruel and unmanly creature who now commands this ill-omened ship, has insulted me with proposals of the basest nature, and threatens the extreme of imprisonment in return for the answer he received; if anything can assist me in this extremity, it is that courage and presence of mind which distinguishes yourself. I will not be so selfish as to ask you to court unnecessary sorrow and danger; but if you can prove of any assistance to me in this last extremity to which a woman and a wife can be driven, I implore you to lose not a moment in trying to rescue from the worst of horrors your devoted Nora.—P.S. I am now firmly convinced that the pretended necessity for keeping the ladies of our party on board was a mere excuse to further the villany to be put into operation against me, by the absence of every gentleman belonging to our party who could be of the slightest protection."

## CHAPTER THE NINTH.

### BAMBOOZLE DISCLOSES HIS GREAT AFFECTION FOR PAUL.

While our friends Eveline and De Passoa interest themselves in the rescue of Nora, we will, in the mean time, recur to the fortunes of our hero Paul Periwinkle. Perhaps our readers may remember that we left him on board the same craft which carried that light of science Dr. Bamboozle, and that prince of honesty Jack Alibi. About an hour after the latter worthy, in his province of captain, had sent on shore Nora and her companions, Paul, who was yet very young in his capacity of seaman, came upon the quarter-deck to observe where the vessel was situate.

"How happy shall I feel myself when once the shores of the West Indies heave in sight!" muttered our hero, as he wended his way up the poop ladder.

"I've no doubt you will, Mr. Periwinkle," replied Bamboozle, who happening to be close behind him, and anxious to re-establish the once friendly footing that had existed between them, now commenced a dialogue, which he fondly hoped would lead to Paul's answering it in a conciliatory manner.

"I can easily imagine," resumed the doctor, "how anxiously you must look for the arrival of the ship in some port of safety: and, for your sake, I shall be very glad to see the West Indies too," continued the doctor.

Paul turned round at the voice, and looking at the speaker from head to foot, replied in the most dignified and chilling tones, "Nobody asked you whether you will or will not;" and Periwinkle immediately hastened on deck.

But Bamboozle was not to be so easily thrown off. He knew that he must endure a hard fight before he could bring Paul to forgive his conduct at the execution scene; and, what is more, he was perfectly well aware how richly he deserved all the scorn he met. Taking heart of grace, therefore, notwithstanding Paul's rebuff, he returned incontinently to the charge, thus:—

"No, of course not, Mr. Paul, nobody asked me to express the joy I should feel at seeing you in safety, because I consider it my duty, out of affection for your family and self, to volunteer the remark that bears witness to a feeling too strong for any ordinary control."

"O, no doubt of your affection," bitterly replied Paul. "I had excellent proof of the quality of your affection even at the place of execution."

"Well, really, Mr. Paul, I don't understand to what you can possibly allude. If I did show my attachment to you then, it was only very right and proper that I should do so, since I was really in such a state of alarm that I scarcely knew what I said or did."

"What!" replied Paul, very angrily, "do you mean to tell me that you can't remember having played the part of a thief-taker on that occasion, and done everything in your power to frustrate my escape, and to bring me to the gallows—do you mean to tell me that you can't recollect that?"—and the wrath of our hero seemed to rise with every moment's fresh remembrance of the iniquity in question.

"Good heavens!" replied Bamboozle, with a well-feigned start, "you don't actually mean to say that I did that?" then seeing that the other was about to reply, and very cogently, he added quickly, to prevent Paul from speaking, and lifting up his hands at the same time, "I don't mean, Mr. Paul, to doubt your word for a moment; but all I can say is, that if you hadn't told me this I never could have believed it. Well, to think of that!—did I indeed? and I all the while imagining I was doing you a service!"

There was something in this impudent lie so outrageously ridiculous, that Paul, notwithstanding his anger, could scarcely keep from laughing; while Bamboozle, seeing that he had got an advantage, was not slow to follow it up by saying:—

"Well, you really have astonished me! I am only extremely glad that this opportunity has occurred of an explanation, or else you might really have thought it unkind. How could you have possessed so much nerve in that dreadful scene? Why, you seemed to have noticed everything that was going on around. Pray, may I ask, did you happen to observe what became of my umbrella?—that morning, by some mischance, I happened to lose it, and the consequence is, I have been in some discomfort ever since."

"Well, Bamboozle," suddenly interrupted Paul, "of all the impudent fellows I ever met, you certainly bear away the palm. After doing your best to give me the most mortal cause of hatred against you, you come and seek my friendship, as if nothing but some ordinary tiff had passed between us, and then mention to me your damned old umbrella, as if either you or any one else cared a single straw about it."

"Stay, Mr. Paul," said Mr. Bamboozle, catching at any subject that would turn off the conversation from his own misdeeds—"You may misrepresent my own conduct as you like, because I am convinced that a further acquaintance with the subject of your delusion must infallibly remove any wrong notions under which you labour; but the subject of my umbrella is too delicate to be thus called into question. I am convinced you cannot be acquainted with its history, or you would not attempt thus to wanton with my feelings. Do you know the history of that umbrella?"

"No, Doctor Bamboozle, nor do I care one curse about knowing it! I know this that the owner is"—but this was just what Bamboozle did not want to hear; he therefore interrupted Paul with—"a great thief no doubt, whoever he may be, for into whose hands soever it may have wandered, he must know he never came by it honestly."

"Well, then, in that respect perhaps he's like you," said Paul, determined to have a rap at the doctor in some way or another.

"No, Mr. Periwinkle, I was just going to explain to you its history, how it first came into my possession."

"And I tell you, Dr. Bamboozle, I don't care one rush about it or you. I tell you my candid opinion—which is, that you are both a couple of humbugs, both the umbrella and you; you're an animate humbug, and that's an inanimate humbug; and what's more, ever since I've known you, I have thought you a humbug altogether."

"Humbug, Mr. Periwinkle," said the doctor,—"humbug is a very harsh term, very much so, particularly when applied to my umbrella, which I am sure never did or ever contemplated any harm to you; and from the way in which you use the term, will you give me leave to ask whether you have considered the derivation?"

"Eternal perdition take the derivation, and you too! I have no consideration to yield to either; man alive, can't you take a hint, can't you see I wish to cut you?"

"God bless my soul! cut me! cut me, did you say?"

"Yes, I did say cut you, I want to cut both you and your acquaintance. Can't you let me do it quietly without this scene and explanation?"

"No, indeed, sir, I cannot."

"You can't, sir," beginning to be surprised in his turn, and fiercely turning round upon the other—"What, may I ask, is your objection?"

"The length of the voyage, the smallness of the ship, and my affection for yourself and family."

"Your affection for myself and family is all a pretence, I want none of it."

"Well, then, the want of society."

"I want none."

"But I do a great deal."

"Then want must be your master!"

"Well, Mr. Periwinkle, this is of course just as you please; but I must take the liberty of entering my protest against such an unreasonable waste of the accommodations of the ship. Among which I hold a very leading one to be something to talk to. Now the captain is no man of education either for you or me to hold any intercourse with. If you have any misconceived notion respecting my confusion on the day of your execution, that is, the day on which you were to have been executed for the——"

"—I don't want to hear anything about it."

"Oh, I beg your pardon, I did not know that was such a very sore subject, or I would not have touched upon it for the world. I only meant to say, that if you have misconceived my conduct on the day that the gallows broke by accident—quite by accident, of course."

"Can't you hold your tongue, sir, and be off."

"Nay, just hear me to the end of my sentence, just hear my argument to a conclusion, and then pronounce what sentence on it you like."

"Well, sir, since you force me, I suppose I must submit; but pray, bring your matter to a speedy peroration, for I had almost as soon have the pestilence breathing in my ear. What is it?"

"Why simply this, sir, if you're inclined not to enjoy my acquaint-

ance, be it so; I am sure I should be the last person in the world to solicit a continuance of it against your will; but I will merely suggest, for mutual convenience, that the declination had better be postponed till the end of the voyage,—for instance, when we arrive at Jamaica, if you choose to walk on one side of Port-Royal streets, while I ambulate on the other, well and good, I can have no possible objection; there will be several thousand other persons with whom I can have the honour of conversing, though none perhaps exactly situated as you are. There are, to be sure, to be found a few persons equally menaced, but they have not managed an escape yet, and therefore they perhaps are not entitled to consideration."

"What do you mean, sir?" demanded Periwinkle, growing very pale at Bamboozle's repeated sarcasms.

"Oh, nothing, nothing, Mr. Periwinkle."

"But I say you do mean a great deal, Dr. Bamboozle, and just take care of your words, that I don't have to wring your neck before we get much further."

"Oh, never mind that, Mr. Paul, though in a neck *heat*, they do say you are rather a dab hand at that sort of thing."

Here Paul's temper, wholly overcome by the taunts of the other, broke out into downright rage, and making a dash at Bamboozle as he stood near him, the latter jumped on one side, and dodged our hero round the mast, escaping all his blows with both the agility and chattering laughter of a monkey, with whom the enjoyment of committing mischief goes for very little, if he cannot also have the delight of witnessing its consequent confusion. At last Paul, finding from want of what the sailors call sea-legs, that he could not lay hold of his agile antagonist, gave up the chase, and walked aft, which, the other, as instantly turning to advantage, danced nimbly behind him, but keeping prudently out of arm's length, and repeating,—"Never mind wringing my neck, Mr. Paul, you can't wring *my* heart, and that, I assure you, is by far the severest punishment of the two, which I dare say you will be able to admit, even if you deny all my other arguments; but I was going to say, we had better tolerate one another's society while we remain on board here, it will be time enough to cut when we get to land. We can cut and come again at Jamaica, you know, though perhaps you may have an objection to that island, as the English authorities are in power there."

Stung to excessive irritation by these taunts, Paul, who called to mind in a most lively manner the Old Man of the sea in Sinbad the Sailor, walked up to the gigantic bulk at the helm, saying,—"Captain Alibi, I wish you would compel that scoundrel to hold his tongue, or not to address his remarks to me. You're aware how he behaved on the day that witnessed my embarkation on board your vessel, and I'm sure, remembering that, you will agree with me that I am the last person whom he ought to trouble with his remarks. I've told him half a dozen times that I wish to cut his acquaintance, and the blackguard won't take no for his answer."

"Hollo there, you varmint little gallipot," cried Alibi, now hailing

Bamboozle, "do you hear what the gentleman says? if you think I'm going to allow any of my passengers, that is officers I meant to say, to be blackguarded on board my craft, you will find yourself rather out in your reckoning, I guess; therefore keep a civil tongue in your head, and don't give Mr. Paul any of your slack, do you hear?—he doesn't want it."

"Oh, very well, Mr. Alibi," replied the undaunted doctor; "that gentleman, as you call him, has merely threatened to wring my neck, and I think, after what has happened with him in that line, I am the person most entitled to call on you for protection."

"Come, come, doctor, no allusion at the gentleman's misfortunes, which I must say isn't handsome any way; if the gentleman wants to cut you, why haven't you spirit above being told twice upon the matter."

"Oh, he wants to cut me, does he? oh, now I understand it,—if the gentleman wants to cut me, of course I can have nothing to say to it."

And as if Bamboozle now for the first time comprehended that this was a matter desired, he drew up on the quarter-deck, took his hat off to Paul, and making a low bow, continued—"Really, sir, I beg your pardon for the mistake I have made; but somehow or other in the matter of cutting, I thought that you were the person who ought to have been dissected, and not I; however, since you have escaped, supposing that you desire to keep the art of doing so all to yourself, I wish you joy of your patent, and you good morning." With that the doctor, in considerable glee, walked below, leaving Paul in full possession of the deck, and no very enviable state of feelings at finding himself made the but of a time-serving fellow, for whom he had the most thorough contempt.

As soon as he saw Bamboozle's head disappear below the hatchway, he felt as if one at least of his torments had departed; but in this matter he had begun to crow before he got out of the wood; in another second up mounted Bamboozle again, and walking up to Alibi with all the appearance of mock gravity, he said,—"As it appears, Mr. Alibi, that this is the last opportunity which I shall ever enjoy of any intercourse with Mr. Paul Periwinkle, perhaps you will allow me to ask him one single question in which I have a very great stake?"

"Well, if it is only one, you may make haste in your putting it," grumbled Alibi, "and let's have done with this sort of nonsense."

"I will, sir," replied Bamboozle, with another low salaam; and then turning to Paul, who stood wondering what in the name of fortune was coming now, the doctor proceeded,—"Pray, Mr. Paul, will you allow me to ask you before we finally separate, whether you really did murder your cousin or not? Because if you really did murder him—"

But scarcely had Bamboozle proceeded thus far, when Paul starting from the spot where he stood, seized a tomahawk from over one of the guns, and made a motion as if to hurl it at his persecutor; but as Paul had anticipated, the motion was enough, for Bamboozle no sooner beheld it, than he nimbly darted down the companion-hatchway, taking refuge in the cabin below.

## CHAPTER THE TENTH.

### THE HERO'S FIRST PRIZE-TAKING AT SEA.

As Paul's vessel drew further and further from the land, the sense of security consequent on the perfecting of his escape gradually produced the most favourable effects on his spirits. Naturally possessing a sharp quick mind, he found no difficulty in adapting himself to the exigencies of his new profession; and though in the comparatively short space during which he had been on board, it was impossible that he could have learnt much of the sailor, still Alibi took advantage of his manifest fondness for the profession, to put him forward as a sort of overlooker of his crew, when he happened to be desirous of boozing himself, with the companion of his iniquity, the mate. In this capacity, the difference of his manners and education somewhat made up, in the feelings of the men, for his evident want of seamanship. It is true, that as he paced the deck, hour after hour and day by day, with all the zeal of the recruit, memory would often bitterly revert to those whom he had been forced to leave behind, and to the very great doubt that existed in his mind whether he should ever be blessed by beholding them again. By degrees, however, the anguish of his feelings diminished as he became more certain of having escaped the disgraceful death that had impended over him, and absorbed in the endeavour to obtain as great a degree of proficiency in his novel pursuit, and that in as short time as possible, he gradually learnt to dwell less and less forebodingly on the future, and to become more reconciled to the past. A week elapsed since the ship's departure from the land, and of all the sails they had chanced to behold from their little deck, Alibi, with wondrous prudence, had always made it a point of honour to run away as rapidly as possible. At last, however, to Paul's longing ambition, they chanced to fall in with a small French craft that had been blown off its own coast while fishing. The moment Alibi perceived the insufficient size and nature of this bark, he boldly made all sail upon it, and pounced down upon the little piscator just as some voracious perch might dart at a minnow entangled among the weeds, —not that the disparity between the vessels was near so great as this comparison would imply, although the savageness of the attacking party was infinitely more,—still the gallant little Frenchman, mindful of the war between the countries, had prudently brought to sea a good supply of muskets; and as French fishing-boats are not unfrequently filled with men, they opened upon the schooner a very sharp and effectual fire, just as her amiable captain, in the full consciousness of resistless strength, ran up alongside his weak prey to perform an operation emphatically termed "cleaning out."

"Right your helm, bear a hand, run the blackguard's stem on.—Show fight, will you, you thieves!" cried Jack Alibi, shaking his

huge fist at the schooner's crew, and getting for his pains a rap from a bullet, which grazed the nerve, passing over that part of the arm we call the funny bone, and made him dance with the most lively emotion.

"Cast loose the bow-gun there, some one of you on the forecastle, you French thieves of night, surrender will you, or I'll blow you out of the water."

But as the French thieves of night did not understand one particle of the words addressed to them, they very naturally paid not the slightest attention thereto, albeit discharging another volley, one ball of which went through Paul's hat, while another killed one of the crew at his side, Alibi found himself under the necessity of terminating so unpleasant a reception as speedily as possible.

"Come forward with me, Mr. Paul," cried he, dashing forward in the bows of the schooner, and turning to the helmsman as he went,—"Stem into them, my boy, take her just abaft the midships. Are you ready with the bow-gun?" addressing his men on the forecastle, and rudely snatching a handspike from the hand of one of them, he lowered the carriage so as to bear directly down on the Frenchmen in the fishing-boat, and discharging its contents among them with the words "there's a jolly shot, Mr. Paul," looked back to our hero, who was not a little shocked to behold several of the unfortunate wretches fall a victim to their vain resistance. Still when men have arms in their hands, which in another second may take your own life, the mildest-tempered people can easily palliate the fortune of war going against their antagonists instead of themselves. This was so far the case with Paul, that in the excitement of the moment, he considered the whole affair a very fine thing, and as the first instalment of that glory which—in some way or another, though he could not exactly comprehend how—was, he was certain, coming due to him. The moment that the unfortunate Frenchmen perceived this fatal proof of the powers of their antagonist, they set up a cry for quarter. Fortunately for them chance stood more their friend than man, for the helmsman being unable to follow up Alibi's instructions as closely as he was desired, the schooner instead of running stem into her antagonist, merely struck her with a grazing sort of blow. In an instant the vessel's sails were down, and the mainmast overboard from the violence of the shock; while had Alibi's orders been closely followed, she would have foundered on the spot.

"Throw down your arms, you blackguards, *rendez-vous*," cried Alibi, summoning the little portion of French he had learnt in his smuggling expeditions to mingle with his barbarous English. However, on the Frenchmen obeying his orders to disarm, Alibi turned to our hero, saying, "Now, sir, if you just look, you will see me favour those chaps with a little of that discipline which learns folks good manners." Without making any remark as to the fitness of Mr. Alibi for the office of public instructor in such a matter, Paul quietly leapt after his leader into the prize, which, as there was very little wind blowing, was now secured alongside. Greatly to his surprise, he beheld the gigantic captain of the schooner pin a couple of the lean Frenchman together by the collar,

and thrash them with the flat of his sabre, until they yelled most doloronsly.

"I'll teach you, you blackguards," cried the flagellator, "to play tricks with my funny bone, besides shooting the crew; if I were to serve you right, I should send every one of you to Davy Jones's Locker together. Here my boys, jump on board one or two of you," hailing his crew, "and do a turn or so of justice."

After the ominous language already indulged in, Paul began to be afraid as to what this word justice might mean. His fears, however, were allayed when he perceived his shipmates simply strip the Frenchmen and their craft of every article worth possessing. All the fish-lines, hooks, nets, *et cætera*, were bundled together on board the schooner with wondrous expedition, the muskets and ammunition followed, after which the English sailors turned to and stripped their gallant foes so completely of their clothing as to leave them almost in a state of nature, and when thus reduced to the last condition in which life could be maintained, Alibi addressed himself to the shivering sons of Gaul :—"Now, you miserable undersized whelps of the sea, if you have anything like common decency among you, you will be grateful and thankful to me for the rest of your lives." On what exact score this feeling of gratitude was to be evinced, the modest Alibi forgot at that period to state, and Paul, preferring to cross-examine him at some future stage of his meek existence when he might be less excited and engaged, obeyed the command to quit the unfortunate fishing-boat, which was then cast off, and given up to the guidance of its destitute crew, who no sooner found themselves out of hearing as they thought, than they set up a universal outcry of French execration. As it happened, however, this was very distinctly audible to all on board the schooner; and when it met Alibi's ear, his hideously scarred visage broke into still more revolting laughter, as he exclaimed with a jeer to the men who surrounded him, "Growl away, ye thieves of France, I never wish to hear better music." Then turning to our hero, "There, Paul, you have been at the taking of our first prize, and if you agree with me, you must say it's as jolly a profession as any going ashore; to be sure, we haven't got much this haul, but of this you may be sure, we shall have a finer mess of turbot for dinner to-day than many a crown'd nob sits down to."

"Indeed," replied Paul, who felt that he certainly wanted some consolation to reconcile him to a species of enjoyment so very different from that which he had always been accustomed to regard. "Pray, may I ask, Mr. Alibi," added he, "what is the exact species of commission under which we are entitled to capture the enemy; have we what are called letters of marque, or are we regular privateers?"

"Oh, we're in the privateering line," Alibi replied with a smile, that struck Paul as being rather peculiar, and which seemed to extend its electricity from the face of the huge skipper to those of the seamen around him within hearing

This, however, our hero attributed to his own ignorance in asking such a question, and therefore, by way of making the matter more

clear, he continued, "In that case, I suppose, if we were to fall in with any English man-of-war, we should be obliged to show her our papers."

"Oh, of course, of course, Mr. Paul; but under all the circumstances, I suppose *you* would see the propriety of avoiding, if possible, any such craft."

Such an obvious stress was laid on the word you, that Paul was at once silenced; and seeing Bamboozle approaching him with a broad grin on his countenance, as if to renew an acquaintance which he had already declared to be so disagreeable to him, he, to put an utter denial on any such affliction, at once hurried down below.

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## CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

### SOMETHING VERY LIKE PIRACY.

On retiring to the little space which Paul was fond of nominating his cabin, he very religiously took down a book which he called his journal, and, with all true forms of gravity, therein entered a detailed account of what he termed his first action. The real sorrows which Paul had undergone, had induced upon him what is commonly called a thirst of glory. Now, so dire a desire is, as it ought to be, only the result of some most awful draught, vague notions of dying on the field of battle—falling like the Chinese admiral Rag-tag-and-bob-tail, while "gracefully leaning on the mast," with various other poetical and suicidal ideas, crowded themselves upon his mind; every object of life in his own legitimate name and person did indeed appear so lost to him, that we scarcely wondered at the melancholy train which his thoughts now took for gaining an honourable death, even if all else were denied to him. Having for several minutes regarded the above entry with much complacency, he replaced the journal in its nook, and thankful that his service had at length fairly commenced, laid himself down upon his cot; still he could not help questioning, with some degree of doubt, how far the exact line of operations in which he was embarked was suited to those lofty notions we have ventured to particularize. This doubt turned his attention more especially towards the navy. He remembered to have heard that the king's ships in time of war were accustomed to board the weakest kinds of their country's vessels, and take men out by violence to serve in the fleet. Revolting and cruel as he had always admitted this system to be, he now, so great was his extremity, determined, that should the pressgang come on board the schooner, he would allow himself under his feigned name to be taken on board a man-of-war, where, such is the sanguine temperament of youth, he doubted not he should be able either to cover himself with glory, and so falling in the moment of victory, remain an immortal theme on the lips of his grateful

countrymen; or, meeting the favourable eye of his captain, be promoted to the quarter-deck, and so with his own good sword carve out his way to honour and to fame. These considerations also led him *en passant* to consider, whether there was not something funny in the expression of Alibi and his crew, when answering that very natural question which he had put concerning the ship's papers; but so wholly inexperienced was Paul in matters of the sort, that after reflecting for several minutes on the subject, he was unable to detect any reason why Alibi should so have behaved, and therefore gave him credit for having accidentally fallen into a manner that concealed no import. With these reflections he fell fast asleep. After several days spent in the usual monotony of an uninterrupted sea-voyage, he was one morning disturbed from the enjoyment of a book which he had been reading, by the discharge of two of the schooner's forecastle guns; running up on deck to share in the fun, the first person he encountered was Alibi.

"Well, captain, what's in the wind now?"

"Oh, nothing, Mr. Paul, but a sail of the enemy."

"Enemy, Alibi, where? let me have a look at her; where's your glass?"

"Here it is, sir, but I am afraid it's had a strike with the sun, for I can't see very clearly through it myself."

"Oh! never mind, I'll manage to get it at the right focus; so now I have it—why, she's close up with us."

"Ay, Mr. Paul, she's tripping along there, all snug on our weather bow, thinking no doubt to get clean off, but come a little less wind we'll soon show her what the schooner's made of."

"What, is there too much wind now? I thought this was a glorious breeze!"

"Ay, so it is, for a heavy square-rigged craft like that yonder, but the schooner's best point of sailing is a few points free, not close-hauled; once let us have our own way in that little matter, and we'll soon be overhauling that chap's lockers. Forward there on the forecastle, send another shot across his forefoot: the fellow may be fool enough to shorten sail, and ask who we are."

In a few seconds after the command had been given, Alibi's men, ever ready to work mischief, quickly followed their master's order, and discharging the vengeful missile with but too good an aim, it skimmed lightly over the surface of the dark blue waters, and dashing playfully from wave to wave, lifted slightly as it went, and striking some of the bowsprit-shrouds of their antagonist, resulted in the springing of the vessel's bowsprit.

"Who fired that gun?" demanded Alibi, the moment his keen eye detected the advantage he had gained.

"Capper, sir," replied the voice of the mate from the forecastle.

"Let his grog for to-day be doubled, that was a right good shot," with an oath returned the politic chief, who knew the value of such marksmen much too well ever to allow one to go unrewarded.

"Capper, my boy," continued he, "try your hand at another shot; see if you can come that dodge again."

"Stay, stay, stop your fire," wildly cried Paul Periwinkle, "'tis not an enemy's ship you're firing into at all; see, see, she hoists the red English ensign. It is a friend's ship."

A loud laugh burst from the men on the forecastle, and once more Paul observed the same peculiar look pass over the sinister countenance of Alibi, as the latter replied with a strange indifference upon so important a subject,

"Is it? let me look—give me the glass, Mr. Paul."

"There can be no doubt of it, Alibi; can't you see the red with your naked eye?"

"Oh, as to the ensign, Mr. Paul, you'll soon learn to know that goes for next to nothing,—even those rascals the pirates can hoist that upon an occasion; I'll soon tell you whether she's a friendly build or not;" then, pretending to scrutinize the vessel very narrowly for some minutes on one knee, he slowly rose, and addressing his men on the forecastle,

"Fire away, my hearties, she's no friend. Now, Mr. Paul, just look at that craft again, and you'll see a sort of something about her build which no English vessel ever had." Paul, on hearing this assertion, was naturally anxious to improve his slender stock of information as much as possible, and therefore, taking the glass in his hand once more, he tried very hard to detect that distinction so important in its results, and which the worthy Alibi asserted to be so plainly visible.

Strange to say, however, whether from Paul's natural obtusity or other cause he knew not, for certainly to Paul's eyes the craft in question looked as like an English vessel as any it had ever been his lot to see in the countless crowd of London Pool. Still he thought that no human being ever could or would incur the risk of firing on any parties that looked at all like fellow-countrymen, without being previously quite certain that it was a false resemblance only; never doubting therefore for an instant that Alibi had spoken the truth, Paul looked, and looked, and wondered, in what this marvellous difference could consist. Afraid, however, of showing any ignorance before the crew, in whose eyes he naturally wished to appear as knowing as possible, he thus fell blindly into the snare laid for him, and resigning the glass to his captain with a troubled countenance, began to rub his eyes and brows with the air of a man conscious of looking very considerably like a fool.

"Well, Mr. Paul, don't you see the difference now?" demanded the astute Jack Alibi.

"Why, really," replied our hero, sadly bothered, "now you point it out to my notice, there is a something about the vessel that—that—that—but truly I feel my experience so slight, when put in comparison with your own, that I really don't like to give an opinion on the matter. I can only trust, therefore, to your superior judgment to save us from the horror of firing on one of our own nation."

"Lor', Mr. Paul, do you think"——

"Oh no," interrupted Paul; "I'm quite certain that you wouldn't

for a moment contemplate such an atrocity, unless you were perfectly certain"——

"Certain?—Lord, no, sir, I should never sleep again if I thought of such a thing." At this instant—bang went off two of the forecastle guns. Quick as lightning, Alibi forsook the interesting discussion with his young pupil; and leaping on the bulwark of his brig, and anxiously scrutinizing the course of the shot just fired, cried out, in rapid encouragement to his men—

"That's right, my boys; you've hulled them; go it again; a few more like that will soon bring her to her senses." And accordingly "go it again" the amiable creatures on the forecastle did, until shot after shot striking the merchant vessel, she seemed by degrees to become aware how powerful was the antagonist against which she was striving. As one wide rent after another was made in her canvas, she necessarily fell more and more to leeward, while, from the firing of the guns, the breeze gradually died away: she now by degrees grew within such close range of the schooner as to feel tempted to open the fire of her own comparatively weak and ineffective metal. This, however, only excited the laughter of their more powerful adversary, and while it gave an opportunity for the fire on the schooner to become more deadly and severe, it encouraged the crew of the latter to gain all that strength which an abortive resistance always excites in the minds of the attacking party. As soon as the merchant vessel, which was of some size, perceived the dangerous and almost hopeless nature of the contest in which she was engaged, her officers and crew seemed to have come to the determination that a last desperate effort at boarding was the only alternative left in their power. With this view, Paul distinctly saw them put their helm up, and run down, as if to lay the schooner aboard upon the weather-bow. By this time she had approached so near, that being already to windward of them, Paul almost fancied, as the fresh breeze wafted towards them the smoke of her guns, that he could also distinctly distinguish with it, in familiar English, the well-known cry, "Up with the helm;" and if he were right in this conjecture, there could of course be no doubt that Alibi's crew were destroying the lives of fellow-countrymen. Full of this impression, Paul hastened aft to Alibi, and communicated to him his fears. He might, however, have spared himself all further trouble on this point, since he received nothing but laughter for his pains. Indeed, so intent was the worthy skipper upon watching the necessary manœuvres of the fight, that a shout of derision would be even a better term for the nature of his reception.

"Now, my boys," cried Alibi, when he had thus effectually got rid of Paul's interruption, "pepper away at the heads of every mother's son of them that you see popping above the hammock nettings. Pitch it into them." Then, in a muttered tone of voice to his mate, who stood at his elbow, while he fondly imagined that Paul did not hear him,

"I wish to God a stray shot would take off that d——d prying youngster. We shall never have any peace till he's disposed of. Now, my mate, here she comes; down with the helm—quick—round with it.

We'll show her a nimble foot, now that she's coming a dodge before the wind. Ease off the weather-braces—round in the lee."

Swiftly as the command was given, it was complied with; and in a few seconds the rapid schooner was shooting down to leeward three feet for every one of her more bulky antagonist. When this course had been persevered in for a quarter of an hour, the crew of the merchantman suddenly beheld all their efforts to close with their nimble opponents rendered nugatory. The provoking schooner now lay at nearly the same distance at which she had first opened fire, and which the schooner already knew was too distant for her enemy's guns to have any beneficial effect. After sustaining the unequal contest for as long a period as she possibly could, she was at last obliged to have recourse to the stern necessity of all captured craft, and haul down those colours respecting which Paul had so reasonably entertained the doubt we have expressed. As soon as Alibi detected the sinking of that ensign which he so much disliked, he set the example to his men of giving three cheers over the fallen foe, and then the word of command, "Pipe away the long-boat." For the first time, Paul now began to think that this really was a prize worthy of some contention. As soon therefore as he heard the long-boat piped away, he girded on a cutlass, and prepared as before to accompany his captain, and aid in taking possession. Singularly enough, however, that worthy individual no longer appeared to feel as formerly the necessity for his services; and, greatly to the lowering of Paul's zeal on this occasion, gently laid his hand upon the volunteer's collar, saying, as he did so,

"Bravo, Mr. Paul; who says you're not always the foremost where duty's to be done? Just allow me a private word with you," taking our hero slightly on one side, as if he had a matter of great importance to communicate,

"What is it?" anxiously demanded the young *aspirant*.

"Why, it is this, sir. We may have some tough customers on board that craft which we have just made strike, and therefore I can't in prudence attempt to lay my boat alongside of them without taking my mate with me, as, in case I should get knocked on the head, my chaps might be disheartened, and not only beat us off, leaving me lying bleeding on the decks, but as luck generally runs in a dead-set in one way, when once she commences it, the matter might end perhaps even in our losing the schooner, and you being made prisoner among the rest. The favour therefore I want to ax of you is this: if you will be good enough to stay on board here, and take charge of the barky, while I and the rest of them take possession of the prize?—you see I shouldn't like to trust the ship without some one in her."

"Oh, certainly, certainly," said our hero, cheerfully acceding to this proposition, which to his unpractised fancy seemed to contain within it a great deal of honour and confidence.

"Thank ye, sir, thank ye," returned the wily Alibi, grasping Paul's hand with every show of the most obliged friendship. Then turning round to one of his mates, and muttering, "I've stopped the mouth of that gull for a time. Now, my boys on the forecastle there, stand

by to jump on board the boat as soon as she draws up alongside; and mind, you dogs, you're all of you armed for sharp service." There was something in the heartless tone in which these words were uttered that caused Paul to turn round for an instant and regard the speaker. Surely he could not have been deceived; and yet if he were not, he was unable to account for the fact which he observed, namely, that the same sinister smile which had so often before attracted his attention now again lent its odious light to the features of Alibi: it was but for a moment, and ere he could well remark it ceased to be observable. In a few more seconds the seamen had all leaped into their long-boat, and left our hero in charge of the schooner, with no one to form his crew-save Bamboozle, whom he so cordially detested, and an old cook, whom the fortunes of war had rendered lame of a leg. Possessed of this resplendent ship's company, our hero trod the quarter-deck with quite as much pride as ever filled the bosom of Nelson, exulting, in the Gulf of Genoa, on the evening before the gale which dismantled his squadron. Little, indeed, did the kind-hearted, but now thoroughly elated Paul imagine the purposes to which his aid was made subservient. There is an old adage, which youth generally disbelieves, or rarely tolerates until every step in life forces it more and more on our acceptance: it is this,—"We cannot put old heads on young shoulders." Unaccustomed, as we all must be, at the outset of life, when confidence and enthusiasm are among the leading characteristics of the mind, to look for roguery and deceit in every kindness that is proffered to us, youth is necessarily the age for being duped and betrayed on every side, and there are few indeed who gain much experience without undergoing their full share of this penalty. There was one, however, on board the schooner fully alive to the game which Alibi was playing, and equally anxious, at all hazards, to make Paul a participator in his knowledge; but, unfortunately, Paul had in another matter discovered his knavery, and thus all power of disclosing the roguery of others was taken from him. Unfortunate as this proved, it was one of those evils to be lamented rather than helped, and the burden of it fell, where it was most proper it should fall,—namely, on the guilty party. This was, we need scarcely say, Bamboozle. As the long-boat left the schooner, the doctor stood eyeing it with inconceivable emotion; and it had scarcely got beyond hearing when Bamboozle, running up to Paul, exclaimed—

"Now, Mr. Paul, now is the time for our liberation at last: quick, quick, for Heaven's sake; another may never arrive." Paul looked at the speaker for a few moments, as if it was impossible that any mere glance, or even words, could ever give utterance to the feelings of intense hatred that boiled in his breast; and then having silently measured the unfortunate doctor from top to toe, in the same mute style, turned his back upon the light of science as if he were unworthy even of a sound.

"What!" exclaimed Bamboozle, with a look of the utmost bewilderment; "won't you speak to me now?" Paul here treated Bamboozle to a second look of unspeakable disdain, and then walked forward to the forecastle.

"For God's sake, Mr. Paul," said the other, following him close, and in his anxiety catching at a part of his clothing, "if you have any cause of quarrel against me—for mercy's sake postpone it to some more fitting time, and be pleased not to let it interfere to work the ruin of us both at a moment when our union should be of the closest kind."

To this energetic appeal Paul replied with the coldest disdain,—"So far from union with you, sir, it is a drawback on the breath of life, that I'm compelled to inhale it in the same atmosphere with one whom I so thoroughly despise."

"Can't you consent, for your own sake, to let this unreasonable hatred have some breathing pause? Can't you let me inform you on what a precipice you are standing?"

"I know I am, the moment I descend to any communion with yourself; villany like yours endangers every thing that approaches it."

"This is hard to bear, Mr. Paul, very hard for one who's known you from a child; can't you give me credit for some degree of truth in this matter? Isn't my own stake in this ship sufficiently heavy to warrant you in believing that I shall deal in a straight-forward manner?"

"Psha! Doctor Bamboozle; have I not already tried you? do I not know your character? the eagle cannot swim, nor can the dolphin fly; where would be the advantage of again trying an experiment which has already failed most utterly?"

"But, Mr. Paul, hear me only for this once: I tell you, you do not even know what ship you are standing on; you do not—you cannot know who and what Jack Alibi is."

"This I know, Doctor Bamboozle, that he rescued me from an unmerited and disgraceful death, while you did your utmost to bring me to the gallows; what your motives were for aiding in such a judicial murder you best know; they cannot have been anything creditable, and therefore I will not hear one word from you in disparagement of any being's character, much less that of one to whose courage and daring I owe my life."

"But it is to preserve your character as well as life—"

"—I won't hear you even speak," replied Paul, retreating. "I disbelieve each word you utter; your object is clearly to seduce me from my duty, and I have no doubt you would be the first person to betray me to Alibi's just resentment, if I were fool enough to listen to your tempting."

"I see how it is," at length cried Bamboozle, in a rage. "I see now, for the first time, that you are no longer the dupe that you pretended to be. No, Mr. Paul, I see very plainly that you are the accomplice of Alibi in all his villany, and I shall live to enjoy a bitter revenge. You can't always be successful, and if—"

"Down below, you pitiful, spiteful caricature upon humanity; down below, you charlatan, or, old as you are, I'll pound you to a mummy."

There was something so savagely fierce in the aspect of our hero's countenance as he uttered these words, that a sudden panic seemed to reduce Bamboozle to the position of the heroic Hector, for taking to his heels, he fairly fled along the deck,—Paul pursuing him across the

[illegible] reach of [illegible]

gangway up to the very companion-hatch, into which the nimble little doctor jumped with wondrous quickness, and shut and bolted the door, so rapidly, that the other could not get at him; while Bamboozle remained grinning like some mischievous monkey-spurred into wrath by well-deserved chastisement. When Paul saw his funny little phiz chattering and mowing at him through the trellis-work of the companion, that was left uncovered to obviate the effects of the heat, all his wrath vanished, and he could scarcely forbear a hearty laugh at the ridiculous spectacle presented by his diminutive tormentor. Seizing the padlock that made fast this entrance to the cabin, so that the worthy "Bam," as the sailors called him, could no more exude, Paul resumed his stately march upon the deck of the schooner, where, delightful thought! he was supreme lord and master. As, however, he was perfectly susceptible of having been considerably ruffled; hero as he was, and nursing thoughts of high ambition, he, for the sake of soothing the perturbation of his mind, walked forward to that portion of the schooner called the galley, but which landsmen term the kitchen, where the one-legged cook, whom Heaven had favoured in so quarrelsome a region with the blessing of deafness, was busily occupied in doing summary justice upon a tender but now exhausted turtle, which had been caught napping upon the high seas by those who termed themselves the lords of the domain. Taking his seat upon the schooner's bits, which commanded an elevated view of the whole premises aforesaid, the fresh breeze, as it rolled gloriously over the bright blue water, and rejoiced in the unsullied purity of a cloudless sky, bore upon its fragrant wings the rich steam of sundry spices, wines, and condiments, already gently simmering in a huge and venerable cauldron, from which the one-legged cook had already removed the cover, previous to freighting it with the luxurious tribute of old ocean's game. At sea a man is always hungry. It is one of the greatest blessings peculiar to the world of waters:—that is, when you have anything to eat. Day breaks to find you ravenous; the duties of the arduous hours succeed, enlivened by the recurrence of occasional repasts, the only time-mark of their solitary life, and the glorious sun returns to its resting-place but to find you in the same delicious state of ferocious greediness with which it lighted on you sixteen hours before. The perpetual exercise of limb, and the passing of existence in the open air, not only demand a continual supply, but render the ills of plenty the bugbear of a slothful landsman. *There* is to be found nothing that ever approaches to fat! No dreadful visions of forthcoming corpulency set snares around the appetite, or garnish the favoured dish with tares; and though, to be sure, famine sometimes stares sailors in the face *en passant*, and a short allowance of salt horse is often deemed a godsend, while a stinted allowance of stinking water too frequently becomes an unobtainable luxury, yet still, when food is to be had, it nowhere carries with it so keen a sense of enjoyment. We feel this explanation due to the memory of the one-legged cook; without it his conduct might on this occasion be considered by the fastidious as bordering on the indelicate and corporious. Ah, how greatly would this estimation

of his character render injustice to the sublimity of his soul! He was a Frenchman, a real professor of his art, one of large reading, profound sentiments, and an inimitable fellow for a sauce. He had heard the quarrel between Paul and Bamboozle, and treated it with merited contempt. They might or they might not proceed to blows, and if proceeding to blows, one might or one might not be slain. With that he had nothing to do. In his time he had seen five hundred quarrels; he himself had lost his leg in one, and seen many others lose their lives after the same fashion; but in all his experience he had never seen the dinner of the survivors at all affected by the result. With the dinner, therefore, he proceeded. That was the point in issue. The turtle was one, too, of unusual make and beauty; and all the previous steps having been taken, Paul came upon him just as he drew near his lovely victim, who lay languidly flapping its huge fins, thoroughly exhausted by previous effort. As Paul took his seat, the cook drew from a cupboard a large tankard, and with a sharp-pointed knife in his hand stood for several seconds musing on the magnificence of the sight before him. Then when his eyes were sated, he gently lifted up the doubtful fish upon a seat at hand, so that the hawk-like head and neck hung down. Placing his tankard below this, he seized the throat of the victim in one hand, and while the animal was occupied in a last desperate struggle to regain its liberty, the one-legged cook, with amputating skill, swiftly circled his trenchant weapon round the yielding tube with the other, and thus by a single incision decapitated the illustrious sufferer. In an instant the red volume of the vital fluid rushed through the severed arteries into the tankard below; the left hand of the one-legged cook guiding the palpitating neck as a fireman does the engine tube, until the last throe of life was extinct, and the vessel filled. So far, Paul considered this to be one of those terrible necessities which all statesmen contemplate with more or less severity. The next step taken by our culinary friend did somewhat surprise him; it was that of raising the filled tankard to his lips, much as an Englishman would a pot of porter, and after carefully wiping the same with his hand, he paused for an instant to contemplate the draught, and then took it off with a single breath, seeming infinitely delighted by the same.

"If this is not a queer taste," muttered Paul, "I don't know what can come under the denomination."

Fully impressed with this notion, he was about to interrogate the one-legged *artiste*, when his whole attention was wholly absorbed by a piercingly shrill cry coming down from to-windward, where still lay the merchant vessel with Alibi and his men on board. Another and another succeeded in startling succession; even the one-legged cook suspended his operations and looked up, while Paul, with his whole frame agitated, darted to the weather-bow of the schooner, as the nearest point of observation.

"Hark!" cried Paul, as if addressing some one at his side, "there it is again; what a shriek of agony! surely it cannot be a woman's! and yet I hear it still as if sinking lower and lower from exhaustion.—It is a woman's,—it must be, it can be nothing else;—yet surely they have not—"

What formed the sequence to this impossibility in our hero's mind we know not, since he uttered nothing more, but remained some seconds gazing intently on the decks of the merchantman with his telescope. Whether the thoughts quickened into action by this singular occurrence may not have recalled to his mind the stifled observations of Bamboozle we know not. It is very likely that they might, since being unable to detect anything stirring on the vessel's decks, he in a few minutes resumed his muttered soliloquy in broken sentences thus:—

"They cannot have been guilty of any unnecessary violence to the crew or passengers on board—" Here, however, any further reflections were terminated by a shout of triumph, and Paul perceived Alibi and his crew descend the sides of the captured vessel into their boat. It certainly did strike him, that the pace of none of these heroes was remarkable for its sobriety. He could also plainly distinguish that they bore in their hands various goods and chattels, which he rightly set down as the spoils of the enemy, and getting ready a rope to fling the first of the boats on its arrival alongside, he waited impatiently for some explanation of the mysterious sounds he had heard. In addition to the schooner's barge, which had originally boarded the merchant vessel, he now perceived several other boats approaching, and these were manned by parties whom he had never seen before, and whom he therefore concluded to be volunteers from the captured vessel. As the boats drew within hearing, our hero's attention was wholly absorbed by the loud cries of triumph which they set up; and a single glance sufficed to show him that commander and crew were all in a state of furious intoxication. As soon as the former reached the side, he struck our hero familiarly on the shoulder, exclaiming with the accompaniment of sundry intervening hiccups, "Now, my boy, your fortune's made at last! The chase we have captured was a craft homeward-bound from Mexico, laden with quicksilver, and we've got all our boats crammed full of it."

"Ay, Bo!" interrupted the mate, "and it's almost as walyable as gold if we can once bring it to land."

"*If*, you fool!" angrily said Alibi, "who says there's any doubt about it? You attend to getting it out of the boats, and don't interfere when you see your skipper talking to a brother officer."

"Brother devilskin!" sulkily murmured the mate, turning away evidently not very well pleased with this new assumption of authority in one who had hitherto treated him as an equal; and going forward among the men, Paul either heard or imagined some remarks to the effect that Alibi was beginning to be uncertain whether he stood on his head or his heels now that he had met with a little success, to say nothing of words still more significant, beginning with—"Whoever heard of brother officers I should like to know among"—the sound that followed was one Paul hardly dared believe, and though almost certain he had not mistaken it, he wilfully excluded its hearing. However, in a few minutes the quicksilver, which was contained in leathern skins of goats carefully sewn up, was handed on board the schooner, and while Alibi in maudlin joy was boasting of the fortune they had encountered, Paul observed the seamen sink the extra cutters and jolly-boat they

had brought from the prize, and then hoist on board their own barge.

As the booty they had acquired was of a species very new to our hero, one indeed of which he had neither ever heard or thought, he endeavoured to obtain from Alibi some account of the vessel from which it had been obtained. All Alibi's answers on this head were, however, very vaguely replied to, and from the evident wish to turn the conversation into a different channel, Paul soon discovered how very unwelcome was the subject, and abandoned it.

"But where have you allowed her to go?" said our hero, thinking that at least there could be no harm in this question. In reply, however, to so plain an inquiry, Paul observed the same suspicious smile steal over Alibi's countenance, while the latter hastily rushing off the deck into the cabin below, muttered some words which, to our hero's ears, sounded exceedingly like—"To the devil if she likes!"

At this juncture Paul also heard a burst of merriment from the cabin below, and knowing that only Bamboozle and Alibi were the tenants of it, began to put together the various suspicious circumstances of the morning, the shrieks in a female voice which he had heard from the prize, Alibi's broken answers, and Bamboozle's evident wish to make him the depository of some dangerous secret,—then coming most unwillingly yet still very naturally to the conclusion, that Alibi's conduct must be at variance with his professions, and that in short it was such as required Paul to examine, for his own sake, he looked round for the merchant-vessel whence the shrieks had proceeded, in order to reconsider to what nation she belonged. The reader may, however, judge the horror which possessed him when in the place where she had so lately floated he perceived nothing but the dark topmast and yards protruding from the water, and almost in the very instant that he observed them—they were gone! On witnessing this extraordinary disappearance, Paul drew his hand across his eyes in considerable doubt of its reality.

Had the vessel sunk? It was scarcely possible not to believe the forcible evidence of his own eyesight, and this was of a nature so terrible, that every limb trembled under him at the bare possibility of its truth. With eager eyes and anxious pace he snatched up the telescope, and directed it successively towards every quarter, in the vain hope of finding himself mistaken, and detecting the object for which he sought in some other direction of the horizon.

Perhaps the schooner might have swung with some flaw of wind, while he was engaged in his own sad reveries; and this would account for the merchant vessel having momentarily escaped his eyesight. This hope was, however, but the idle longing of a mind driven to those confines where expectation borders on despair. The breeze had died away, and the burning circle of the distant horizon lay still as a shield of silver, round every quarter of the schooner. Not the slightest pretence for a vessel could he descry throughout the whole range of his eyeglass.

"It was no mistake," sorrowfully muttered Paul; "she must have sunk with every soul on board, and this could only have been Alibi's

doing; and if so, what in the name of fortune can be the object of our cruise, and what, indeed, the character of ourselves? That is the worst part of it. If these be our deeds, what then are we?—"

"—PIRATES!" said a low and startling voice of triumph at his elbow. Turning swiftly round, Paul perceived beside him the grinning countenance of Bamboozle. The word had been the echo of his own thoughts; and so stricken was our hero at the strange coincidence, that all remembrance of his quarrel, and the hatred which he bore to the speaker, vanished in a moment.

"Good God!" exclaimed Paul, seizing Bamboozle's hand without a thought, "is this the secret that you wished to impart to me?"

"If you would have heard it while it was of any use," replied the doctor, who felt it was his turn to lead, "I would have given it you; but now that we must grin and bear it, you may as well learn to turn pirate as anything else, upon the cards. It is but a prejudice of society which puts the profession to a discount."

This was said evidently with a feeling of pique, which Paul rightly interpreting, hastily, and with that generosity which was inherent in his nature, he replied—

"Forgive me, Doctor, for the suspicions I have entertained, and for the wrongs I have done your motives. Even you, however, must admit the provocation you have offered; and, since we are thrown into this position, let us resume that acquaintance which perhaps I ought never to have laid aside. If you are earnest in your belief of this vessel's character, come to my cabin this evening, and we will consult on the best mode of escaping from the predicament into which we are both unhappily cast."

"Agreed," muttered Bamboozle, returning the friendly pressure of the other's hand. "Believe, me you have not done justice to my motives in that matter of your escape: but we will talk of this hereafter."

"Ay, at any time but now. If the pir—that is the crew—perceive our reconciliation, they will suspect it bodes them little good."

"Right," returned Alibi; and putting his finger on the point of his nose with a surprising intelligence, Bamboozle dived to the cabin, and Paul resumed his walk upon the quarter-deck.

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## CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

### THE INNOCENT CONSPIRACY.

THE last sound of the pirates' drunken revelry had died away—the silent midnight at length knew no further interruption than an occasional oath, and the last dying effort of some persevering bacchanalian to raise the rude hymn of his destroying idol.

"It is time that the Doctor made his appearance, if he intends coming," muttered Paul, turning anxiously on his berth-place to listen, and looking at his watch by the faint moonlight that stole through the quarter-deck skylight, ever and anon, as the vessel rolled sufficiently

to admit the welcome ray—"It has not struck twelve yet, though nearly an hour has passed since that double-faced hypocrite Alibi retired. Can Bamboozle have meant to betray me?" pursued our hero, and then he paused as if his muttered musings had led him to a point whence the view beyond was too painfully interesting to permit of further endurance. Well, indeed, may he have seen thence an aspect of the future sufficiently absorbing in its melancholy to banish all consciousness of the present. Well might his mind, taught by past horrors, wander on to future evils. The thoughts of being embarked, if not in the actual pursuits of piracy, at least among those who had no other aim,—the shuddering reflection that deeds of unspeakable atrocity might, nay, undoubtedly had been, perpetrated but that morning under his own eye, and by the very aid of his own assistance,—the recollection of those piercing cries, uttered, for aught he knew, in the last extremity of human agony, for a mercy never to be found on earth—coming, for aught he knew, from some one young in the pleasing anticipation of life's joys, lovely, beloved, and capable of attracting sympathy from, and affording delight to any beings less callous than those whom he had made his comrades, his friends,—the grief of having owed his own life to such help and to such an association,—the fear of being captured in such society, from a share in whose villanies no protestations could be expected to free him—all these thoughts and reflections must no doubt have weighed with unavoidable horror upon a mind so framed by nature to avoid scenes and imputations such as we have described, and to cherish all that might be most opposed to them. Twilight had scarcely descended on that league of reprobate adventurers, when happy at the release that excluded such villains from his eyes, he had sought the cabin where he knew he could at least be alone, and lying down undressed, had passed the weary hours in ruminating on the sudden disclosure Bamboozle had made. Sleep did not even mock him by a feigned approach, for parched lips and throbbing eyeballs—the frequent sigh and restless motion of the limbs—all proclaimed the fever of anxiety that preyed upon him. The ship, which had long since been resigned to her own guidance by the inebriated seamen, gave out no sign of time, but Paul had already struck the hour of twelve some minutes since on his repeater: when, amid the slow creaking of the ship's timbers, as the schooner gently rolled upon the almost calm surface of the water, Paul distinguished a slight sound, that seemed not to belong to the inanimate matters that alone were then moving.

"That's something like a foot-pace at last," murmured our hero, springing silently from his bed-place. The sound ceased opposite the cabin-door, and was succeeded by a noise like the nibbling of a mouse on one of the little rails outside the bulkhead.

"That must be his signal," added the excited tenant, undoing the fastening, which, since his discovery of the character of his shipmates, he had thought it doubly necessary to use. In an instant the door was cautiously opened outwards, and the unmistakeable figure of Bamboozle presented itself, his bald pericranium just catching the light of the moon upon its summit, and the rest of his queer limbs remaining in the contrast of deep shade.

"You've come,"—at length—Paul would have added to the whisper that saluted his visitor, but no sooner were our hero's lips unclosed, than Bamboozle grasped him tightly by the arm with one hand, while he pressed a finger of the other on his mouth, and swiftly and silently closing the cabin, drew one of the schooner's dark lanterns from beneath his coat, and quietly sliding it so as to emit the slightest possible ray of light, turned this on Paul's face with a look of over-cautious cunning, as who should say, "No one is planning an extra trick on an old rogue, is there?" Then, certain that he had got hold of the right man, he put out his shrivelled paw, which the other, maugre his suspicion, frankly clasped.

"Speak in your lowest whisper," began old Bam, opening the conference. "Though Alibi sleeps, his is but grimalkin's nap. The scoundrel has taken so much, and taken so long about it, he's drunk himself sober; and, as you know, he kicked his cabin door off its hinges yesterday, because he chanced to strike his shin against it. Why scarcely a few yards of thin air separate us."

"I will, Bamboozle."

"Good, Mr. Paul; now to business. As I am only a civilian, and you a man of metal, war, and wounds, and so forth, have you thought of any plan for our escape? You know you're rather a dab hand at that sort of thing;" and a malicious grin was visible as he spoke these words, which showed how deeply the trick of enjoying a taunt on the sore points of others had infixed itself in his habits.

"No, I haven't, doctor," quietly returned Paul, whose eyes flashed fire at the first moment of the other's sarcasm, though he could scarcely make up his mind to believe that it was not the result of unintending chance.

"No, Mr. Paul, none? Thought of nothing to get away from this den—but you understand me?"

"Quite; but so it is, I don't see what we possibly can effect till we get to port."

"When will that be, I should like to know? The day after doomsday?"

"Very true, doctor, I see little chance of it."

"And when we do, ten thousand chances to one but the port to which Alibi will make, may be some infernal Spanish harbour, in the most out-of-the-way part of the West Indies, where we shall be without a single friend to assist, but fifty spies instead to watch us: for I suspect they won't long try to keep their true character from you, but let it break out by degrees; and then, if you don't join them, Heaven help you."

"The very thing I most fear."

"And the very reason, therefore, why you should take most pains to hasten your escape."

"But what are we to do, Bamboozle? Are we strong enough now to rise and secure the crew? If you think so, and will do your best, I am ready at once," and Paul pointed to the weapons which he had laid under his pillow.

Extending his hand once more to grasp the arm of Paul, with a look of derision, Bamboozle replied, "A sharp razor would cut your throat with equal ease, but not much more surely, than such an act of madness. We couldn't dare to use a pistol; and in slitting the windpipe of the first, the row would be sure to wake all the rest."

"Pistol!—Slit the windpipe!" repeated Paul in utter astonishment, for these were novel proceedings for him to embark in—"slit the windpipe! I never intended any other step than binding their hands and feet."

"Pshaw! you had much better bind a dozen cold shot round your neck and jump overboard, than make such an old woman's attempt. In such a case as this you must trust no bonds, but those of death; you might have learnt that from their proceedings this morning."

"This morning! — How know you what their proceedings were?"

"Simmons, who acts as a sort of loblolly boy for me, must needs get as drunk this evening as the rest, and I therefore, to pass away the time, set on him in a little cross-examination, and got out of the maudlin dolt the whole story."

"And what in the name of mercy was the cause of the ship sinking? for startling and horrible as the idea seems, I can believe nothing else."

"If you did, you'd wander very far afield from the truth."

"I feared so; and to what nation did the unhappy crew belong?"

"The English—"

"—Is it possible? How shall I ever be able to endure myself after my culpable neglect in not acting on those sounds, 'Helm a-lee!' And then to think of my allowing myself to be lulled into a disbelief of my own senses? Ass!—dolt!—idiot!—and to reflect on what may have been perpetrated—what endured for my credulity!"

"Hush! hush! be silent. Let us be detected in this meeting, and we shall follow the objects of your compassion."

"Where?"

To this question Bamboozle made no reply, but silently pointing downwards with his finger, an expression of mingled fear and cunning on his speaking features told the rest of his story.

"What!" demanded our hero shuddering, "do you mean that Alibi would dare to take our lives?"

"As soon, ay, and much sooner than he would a spider's, for that would be of no use to him, but your death would. Do you imagine he would pause at that, after sinking a vessel with her whole crew on board?"

"Is it possible then that they were alive?"

"Ay, and as well as you or I."

"Atrocious villain! I had hoped that the only parties on board were those killed by our shot, and that the rest had found refuge here in the schooner."

"Pshaw!—These virtuous volunteers only amount to five; whereas at least a dozen souls were drowned in the merchantman which you

beheld go down, and among them four women, a mother and two beautiful girls of nineteen and twenty-three, with their servant."

"Worse and worse! This is too hideous for imagination; then it was a woman's cry I heard, before Alibi and his villains returned on board."

"No doubt."

"And these helpless unfortunates were actually murdered before our eyes?"

"You needn't throw away your regrets on that head, since it was the only merciful part of Alibi's conduct to them."

"What, then, had any violence been offered to them?"

"The very worst that they could receive."

"To which—"

"—All!—"

"—And did none interfere to save these hapless creatures from such a fate?"

"Their father, two brothers, and the captain, all fell in the vain attempt; and when these were slaughtered, the crew and other passengers ran below. Those who chose to volunteer were allowed to come on deck again; the rest, as soon as the ship had been thoroughly pillaged, and every possible outrage and excess perpetrated, were battened down; the ship heeled over to port; the vessel scuttled in four places under the starboard counter: the craft then righted, and all the unfortunate women left locked up in the cabin, where death was the only relief that this world could ever offer for the wrongs they had undergone. After this Alibi rowed on board with his plunder, and you beheld the closing catastrophe; the ill-fated ship went down with all on board."

For some minutes a deep pause succeeded this horrid explanation, during which Paul seemed unable to draw his breath, so intense was the interest excited in his mind by circumstances whose atrocity he had never till then conceived possible. The remembrance, too, that he had been disporting—absolutely amusing himself—within sight of the very theatre of all this incredible violence and rapine, combined almost to stun the mind that thus suddenly heard it. In addition to these agitating thoughts, Paul now perceived how slight must be the protection that was extended over his own life the moment that the fact of his existence might begin to clash with the interests of Alibi and his lawless and black-hearted myrmidons. A single suspicion—the slightest offence—a word—a breath—might at any moment sweep him from the earth to follow those unoffending but unhappy beings, whose dreadful fate had just filled him with so much distress.

While Paul continued thus musing on Bamboozle's narrative, the latter sat regarding him intently; and having given full time for it to produce the effect he desired, resumed the consultation, by asking in the same whispered tone as before—

"Do you see now the necessity of acting vigorously, and so as to ensure the success of our efforts at the first start?"

"You are right; for I now perfectly observe, not only the imminence of our danger, but that no second opportunity will ever be granted

to us. But what are we to do? You yourself have enumerated all the difficulties of our undertaking, and since you condemn the only project on which I can hit for our rescue, is there none which your greater experience can suggest?"

"I thought, master Paul," said Bamboozle, with a grin of superior intelligence, "that you would be obliged to come to me for assistance, and I hope that it will not be in vain. I flatter myself that I have not lived so long in the world without possessing a slight grain of invention whenever the pinch of adversity may put me upon its production; and the scheme which I am now about to propose to you is one which will incur no risk to either of us, provided that I can rely upon you not to betray the secret."

"On my life—on my soul—that is as truly as I exist before you at this moment, I swear that nothing shall ever draw from me the slightest disclosure of any plan you may communicate."

As Paul said this, he seized the vacant hand of Bamboozle, and shook it with all the warmth of sincere gratitude.

The doctor at once perceived, in the unmistakable candour and truth of youth, the surest guarantee that his confidence would not be misplaced.

"Well, then, Mr. Paul, upon this agreement I will unfold to you my own intentions, and afford the utmost assistance in carrying them into effect. But remember, if by accident or design, Alibi comes to the knowledge of my having proposed this method of escape, I shall hold that you, and you alone, are equally to blame."

"Agreed; and now, what is your plan?"

At this touching demand, Bamboozle drew himself still closer to Paul, and exhibiting no small share of delight at his own superior cleverness, waited for a few seconds in mute triumph, and then proceeded:

"You are aware, Mr. Paul, that the unfortunate merchantman that you saw sunk this morning was laden with a quantity of quicksilver?"

"I know it, doctor; I saw the boats coming on board laden with the ore in the skins, and could not at the time make out what in the name of fortune was the heavy lading that nearly sunk them to the water's edge; for I could see nothing appearing above the gunnels to warrant me in supposing that the boats were close stowed."

"No, Mr. Paul, so heavy a freight packs in a small bulk. The unfortunate man who perished in defending his daughters, owned in Mexico a considerable property in quicksilver mines; the ship and all the lading belonged to him; and after a life spent in the acquisition of wealth, he was coming home, as he fondly thought, to enjoy it. But that has nothing to do with our present project, so let that pass. The skins on board the merchantman were originally packed in cases,—three skins, I hear, in each case, in order to render this part of the cargo more stowable. In the wanton eagerness and desire to cram into the boats as large a booty as possible, most of these cases were by Alibi's men broken open and destroyed; the quicksilver, therefore, now lies on our lower deck protected only by the leather in which it was first

enclosed. Now, so far this is right, that nothing but the impermeable texture of the skins will keep in the subtle metal imprisoned in it; but in destroying the wooden cases that were to protect the leather, our friend Jack Alibi has been guilty of an egregious blunder, of which I thus propose to take advantage."

"What, in the name of fortune, this quicksilver can have to do with our escape, doctor, I am utterly at a loss to conceive."

"No doubt you are, Mr. Paul, and that is the very point on which I propose to enlighten you, and which you could not possibly divine without my assistance. Did you ever happen to see a patient in what is called a state of ptyalism from the effects of this very metal?"

"No, I confess I never have."

"Well, then, I will describe to you the effects as well as the cause by which it is produced; for that, I perceive, will be necessary to make you fully understand the details of my plan. Mercury is merely the name given, as you know in the medical profession, sometimes to the pure quicksilver—as is common also among the rest of mankind—but generally applied to the oxides of the metal prepared for medical use. All these oxides, when given internally to an excess, act upon the glands of the mouth and throat, and produce an excessive secretion, and at the same time an utter prostration of strength; and even, if pursued far enough, the destruction of life itself. But these effects are also to be produced upon the human frame by the external application of the same metal, as well as the internal exhibition of it. Many of our authorities have doubted this point, but I am convinced it must be so, and at any rate I am resolved to try the experiment for our liberation."

"But though I clearly understand the principle of your plan, how shall we be able to put it into execution?"

"In the simplest manner possible. I propose that one or both of us should wound several of the skins containing the quicksilver. By this means large quantities of it will run out upon the lower deck, where all the seamen are living. The ore is, as you know, exceedingly divisible. Millions of small particles will instantly scatter themselves throughout every crack and crevice of the deck, the berths, and the ship's sides; it will get into the men's clothes and hammocks, their naked feet will be unceasingly exposed to it at every step they take while awake, and their clothes and hammocks impregnated with it while they sleep. No metal is more easily oxydizable, and the slightest acid, the dirt of the ship's decks, even their very breath, will produce this result, and the first man among them upon whom the poison causes ptyalism will be merely a means of accelerating the infection of the rest. Thus, then, I hope, in the course of a comparatively short time to have every one of these fellows, from Alibi downwards, laid upon their beam-ends, with their tongues twice too large for their mouths, their heads swollen almost to the size of their bodies, and their strength utterly prostrate. When once we obtain this point, we will take possession of the schooner, run for the nearest point, and deliver them all up to be—"

Here Bamboozle made a sort of motion with his finger behind his right ear, expressive of that last ceremony of justice, which is, after all, but a poor apology to virtue for the crimes perpetrated by wrong.

"Hush," said Paul, lifting his finger to his lips, and glancing fearfully around, as if he expected to see the hyæna-like eyeballs of Alibi glaring from every corner, or was sensible of having around his own neck that noose which Bamboozle had so significantly hinted his intention of gaining for the pirate. "Hush, hush! For Heaven's sake, remember that the overhearing of a single word might cost us both our lives. Amid this partial poisoning of the crew by the effects of quicksilver, how can you expect that we alone are to escape? do we bear, as Shakspeare says, 'a charmed life,' or is our clay of different temper from that of those around us? Your plan is very ingenious, and might, for any thing I can see, answer perfectly, but here is the hole in your cockle-shell that sinks the tiny bark, with all it carries. The very acts that ptyalize the others will, by placing us in the same situation, prevent our profiting by the plan. How came you to have overlooked this?"

"If I had overlooked it, your remarks would have been just; but I have provided against that contingency. Here is a bottle," drawing one from his pocket, "containing diluted nitric acid; by taking ten drops of this twice a day, living as much as possible in the open air on deck, wearing thick shoes, and keeping the surface of your body oiled from top to toe, you will find your system very little, if at all, affected by that influence which will completely subjugate those not similarly protected."

"A thousand thanks, doctor, for your ready kindness in this matter," said Paul, receiving the phial, and bestowing it in a place of security. "Once more I offer you my best thanks and repeated apologies, if any are necessary, for the wrong opinion I once entertained of you, and the rudeness with which I fear I carried that opinion into effect."

"Say no more about it, my dear Mr. Paul, you have already amply atoned for any mistakes into which you may inadvertently have fallen. Let us now lose no more time, but sally forth and complete the attempt at our liberation on which we have just resolved, while I puncture the skins on the larboard side of the deck, do you go round and wound those on the starboard."

"But where shall I find a nail, doctor? for any other weapon might lead to our detection."

"Catch a surgeon without his lancet," returned Bamboozle, producing two rusty nails; one of which having been taken by Paul, they both quietly left the cabin, having previously shut up and secured the dark-lantern.

The skins containing the quicksilver were lying but a few yards from the place where this consultation had been held; in number they might amount to some hundred and fifty; and each party, inserting his arm into the midst of the heap, thrust his nail into the bottom of some eight or ten skins successively on either side; the superincumbent weight caused the metal to be instantly pressed forth from each

of the wounded sacks, and as Paul and Bamboozle performed the operation, they felt the liquid metal gush forth with an icy coolness, while the flickering moonlight was reflected brilliantly back from a small sea of perfect silver, as it surged noiselessly around them. It was a perilous undertaking, and this was the crisis of their danger. If a single eye had been wakeful and observant in that part of the vessel, their detection would have been inevitable, and on their detection would have followed instant death. Fortunately, this imminent risk was but of brief continuance; and in a few seconds, having accomplished the design they had originally proposed to themselves, each of the actors in this singular scene slipped quickly back to his cabin, and laid his head on his pillow—but not to sleep. Every sound that stirred, every roll of the schooner, every ripple of the waves outside, or the motion of the mercury within, gave fresh cause of alarm, and fear of detection. Their terrors were, however, vain. The sun had risen high in the heavens before either Alibi, or any of his crew, arose from those slumbers in which excess had steeped them. The spectacle presented by the mercury excited both surprise and remark. Naturally enough the evident leakage in their prize was attributed to accidental injury. As neither Alibi nor any of his men were able to conceive any possible motive for the wilful waste of their treasure, so the suspicion never having occurred to them, not the slightest examination was made of the wounded skins, to see by what means the quicksilver had leaked out. They were extracted from the middle of the heap where they were found empty, and at once flung overboard, by which means was for ever lost all trace of the artifice our friends had used. For a few days no results appeared to follow the active remedies prescribed by Dr. Bamboozle. Divers and sundry consultations were held between him and Paul as to the probable success of their endeavours. The latter was inclined to despond as to their ever reaping the harvest of their midnight toils; but Bamboozle remained firm to his original opinion, and the result justified the confident opinion he had expressed. One by one the crew began to make sundry complaints to their medical traitor. The atmosphere of the lower deck was sensibly affected by a curious coppery odour. This man complained of pains in his teeth, another of uneasy sensations about his jaws; and on the fifth day Alibi had the pleasure of awakening with his head only twice the size that his neck could conveniently carry. From this moment the effects of the poison spread with a rapidity that utterly astonished the inexperienced mind of our hero. Within a fortnight from the eventful evening of the consultation, the whole of the crew, with Alibi at their front, were rendered so completely *hors-de-combat*, that the charge of the vessel seemed to be resigned to chance, or any other governing power that might feel inclined to assume it. One seaman only, an old north-countryman, who had passed his time chiefly upon deck from the insupportable heat, was partially exempt from the influence that had prostrated his fellows. Totally unable to account for the scene they witnessed around them, the men could only form an imperfect guess at the cause of their calamity. The matter was naturally referred to Bam-

boozle, who stoutly denied that the capture of quicksilver had any influence on the matter, and attributed the whole affection of the ship's company to some endemical disease which must have been caught on board the merchantman they had sunk. To this professional falsehood some show of probability was given by the fact, that himself and Paul remained in full health, while the stings of conscience lending still further vigour to these facts, all hands readily agreed in the propriety of the schooner seeking the first port in the West Indies she could possibly attain for increased medical assistance. Singularly enough, of all the invalids on board, the strongest symptoms appeared in the person of one whose strength of frame seemed to warrant the supposition that he might utterly have defied its utmost influence, namely Alibi. Unable to speak, or scarcely to see any one around him, the unhappy wretch entertained not the remotest suspicion of the real truth. So fearful and so rapid were the powers of this baneful mineral, that Paul could not help entertaining a strong belief that Bamboozle, who had shown such ability in the prevention, had carried out the same principle by administering medicines in furtherance of the malady. The north-countryman being wholly ignorant of navigation, and both Paul and Bamboozle in nearly the same happy position, it is impossible to say whither their united efforts might have guided the ill-omened schooner, had not a gale of wind arisen, and taken into its own helping hand the little vessel's destination. The confusion that occurred on board under the double influence of Bamboozle's machinations and the wind's distress may easily be conceived. Innumerable vessels were seen in the course of their drift before the fury of the elements; but fearful of falling into the hands of the enemy, neither of our friends cared to take special pains in speaking to any stranger, and the heavy sea running added increased difficulties. After eight days' continued course, however, they knew not whither, Paul descried some highlands on the lee-bow, and no difficulties of navigation presenting themselves, they ran onwards until they found themselves entering a most capacious harbour. The very sight of shore was sufficient to induce our friends to anchor at all hazards. On they ran before the gale, and on coming up with the shipping already moored, and much too busy in attending to their own perils to scrutinize those of the schooner, the latter dropped her anchor. Seeing the tricoloured French flag flying at the gaffs of all of the men-of-war, Paul prudently agreed with the worthy Bam to hoist a little bunting of the same nation and description. The object now was to get safe on shore; and though Paul beheld the land of promise and security on all sides of him, he had already suffered too many cruel disappointments to count with any certainty on his escape, till it was perfected—little dreaming under what circumstances a few hours were destined to see him acting as interpreter at a meeting of bankrupts' creditors, and Bamboozle more firmly than ever enslaved and imprisoned.—But this is anticipating our story.

## CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

### THE CONSEQUENCES OF INJUSTICE AND OPPRESSION—THE SLAVE SYSTEM.

NOTHING could exceed the joy, both of Bamboozle and Paul, on finding themselves once more within the shelter of civilised society; anything that promised them a refuge from pirates and cut-throats wore all the comparative delights of heaven.

"I am afraid, gentlemen," said the north-countryman, coming out to his shipmates on the quarter-deck, "I am afraid, gentlemen, we have stumbled upon an enemy's port."

"Never mind your enemy's port—" Paul was about to commence in the fullness of his heart, when a motion from the elbow of the more wary Bamboozle cut short this manifestation of his joy.

"Why so I fear," said the Doctor, taking up the conversation, "and perhaps you would not object to just going ashore in the jolly-boat and ascertaining that question for us?"

"Not object?" replied the north-countryman; "the de'il I would not oject! but I tell you I would object, and that in the most resolute manner possible. Do you take me for a downright fool that I should be so ready to run my head into an enemy's port for your satisfaction? If you want to find the matter out so particularly, why the de'il don't you go yourself?"

Paul now plainly perceived what the wily Doctor had been driving at, and after a sham remonstrance with the seaman, on the propriety of his refusal, the farce ended by our friends expressing their great regret at the necessity of going themselves; and the north-countryman retreating under hatches, that he might not, by any trick, be seduced into accompanying them on this dangerous expedition.

"For that good turn, Bamboozle, I have to thank you," said Paul; "I have been discussing in my own mind numberless schemes for the last three or four hours to get rid of that spy upon our movements, but could hit on no mode of effecting my purpose. You have done it most effectually; and now, I think, we may go on shore in safety."

"Yes, my boy," returned the elder of the two, "the way I think is now pretty clear before us; Alibi is too ill to trouble us, and that fellow is too frightened to harm us. Now you run below and get your traps ready, while I do the same."

"Traps! do you propose taking anything on shore with you?"

"Of course I do, nearly all my kit; and you're a fool if you don't take the same opportunity."

"Not I, Bamboozle; I run no risks, and I implore you to follow my example and do the same. Reflect how little we have on board of any value, and if the wretches were to detect us in the removal, they would at once suspect us, and all our efforts might be lost."

"Tut, man, it is not worth while being nervous after having come

through so much. Besides, there are two or three things on board I can't well do without. Who is to observe us, I should like to know, when we have already frightened below the only man of the crew who is able to show himself on deck?"

"Well, Bamboozle, of course you must act as you think fit, but I declare my resolution not to attempt the removal of one single article."

"Well, Paul, my boy, as you are rather young in the trade, you may stick to your opinion and I'll have mine; at any rate while I go below to get my chattels together, you lower down the jolly-boat and stow away a few arms for us, in case of any emergency."

"Ay, ay, I'll be quite ready by the time you will be back; but if you take my advice—

"Advice, my boy, is never worth anything unless it's asked and paid for, and even then ten thousand to one it isn't taken."

After this plain hint, Paul saw it was in vain to attempt altering the determination at which Bamboozle had arrived, though had he guessed the purpose of the latter to its whole extent, he would have striven still harder to avert an act that could scarcely fail of being calamitous in its result. As it was, however, Bamboozle had his way, and Paul having lowered down the jolly-boat and stowed it with half-a-dozen loaded pistols, and a couple of cutlasses, quietly waited the issue of Bamboozle's return with those chattels for which he risked the whole issue of himself and companion's safety; in due time the worthy doctor appeared, and, as he had already said, no one was on deck or apparently within observation distance, while he and Paul hastily freighted the little bark that was to carry Cæsar and his fortunes. In the course of comparatively few minutes, everything on which Bamboozle appeared to place the least store, including of course his own illustrious person, being safely embarked in their little jolly-boat, Paul shoved her off from the side of the schooner, muttering a thousand grateful blessings to Heaven for the opportunity; and away they rowed as fast as their oars could carry them towards the land.

"Doctor, my boy," said Paul, scarcely able to speak from excessive emotion, "if there is anything like pith in that sinewy arm of yours, show it now. Pull like a true Israelite escaping from the Egyptians. Twenty minutes' good rowing and we are safe beyond their power."

"Take it coolly, my boy, take it coolly," was the reply of the old Doctor, as his little round back bent with the labour now imposed upon him, "there's not the least chance on earth of their discovering our absence; and if they do, I don't see how such cripples as we have rendered them, thanks be to the name of the great Apollo—I say I don't see how such cripples as Alibi and his crew could, in the least degree, interfere with us, armed as we are."

"Perhaps not, Doctor," replied Paul, who observed his friend directing sundry uneasy looks towards the schooner, which ill accorded with the confident tone of his remarks; "but even you yourself would, I take it, be very loath to resume your old position on board that very fast-sailing craft, as Captain Alibi was pleased to term her."

"Why, not exactly, Paul, I confess," said the Doctor; "we have hardly been well enough treated on board to solicit any such reappointment."

"How did you manage, Doctor, with regard to Alibi at starting; did you allow him to know when we were coming?"

"To be sure I did; when assurance is necessary, there is nothing like producing a good stock of it, so I went down to our worthy captain to ask his advice about taking the boat on shore, making a complaint at the same time of that worthy Scotchman for refusing to go."

"And what said the captain to this?"

"Why, to tell the truth, he is so confoundedly frightened at dying, that he was in a humour to have granted me anything; he merely therefore asked how you and I had become reconciled, when I took the liberty of replying that your alarm at the general illness had produced this wonderful unanimity: and no further objection was taken to any part of our proceedings. Now let us double yonder cape and we are safe." As Bamboozle said this, he pointed to a little promontory, on which could be seen an armed sentry parading up and down in the French uniform, from beneath whose authoritative aspect they rightly concluded that not even Alibi would have dared to attempt snatching them, even though he had known the treachery of their intentions towards himself.

"Now Paul, my boy," said the Doctor, "I hope you perceive the notable sagacity of my having brought with me all my traps, and the no less notable folly of your having left your own behind."

"As to the folly of my having left my own, on that score I am truly indifferent. I am too glad to find myself once more my own master even to regret the loss of fifty times as valuable a kit as any I possessed, though I cannot help rejoicing at the fact of your having secured your own, without incurring that detection of which I still think you ran a most unnecessary risk."

"Why, Paul, it is true there was something in that, but when you know the whole facts of the case, I think that even you will admit I did not incur it without sufficient grounds, for during Alibi's illness the rogue was fool enough to tell me how he had gained on board the merchantman no less a prize than two large bags of doubloons."

"The devil he did, Doctor!" involuntarily exclaimed Paul.

"Yes, and more than that," added the other, "he was even ass enough to show them to me."

"What of that—there was no harm in showing them, was there?"

"Only this, that scandalised at the mode in which he became possessed of so much property, I determined to take the liberty of transferring one of the bags to my own safe custody, as well with a view of restoring them to the rightful owner or his heirs, should I ever chance to come across them, as in the mean time of reimbursing myself for the great loss and damage to which Alibi's unjust detention has put me in my profession."

"Well, Doctor," said our hero, after a few minutes' silence, into which this singular disclosure had startled him, "I regret most exces-

sively that you should have been betrayed into doing anything so, so—"

"So what, my boy?"

"Why if the truth must be out, so dishon— that is to say, so imprudent."

"Why what the devil harm can come of it? How young you must be in the ways of the world to take such notions into your head! If a pirate isn't fair game, who the devil is?"

"Well, I am not going to argue a question of abstract principle; all that I can say is, on the first blush of the matter, that I had much rather you had left this piece of cleverness alone: but you know best, I have no doubt."

"To be sure I do, boy! what's the use of a man being knocked about in the world, here, there, and everywhere, if he is not to gain a little experience? However, toss in your oar, for here we are landed at last. Let me caution you, while I think of it, Paul, not to make any sudden inquiries as to the name of the island or anything of that sort, it will only lead to our being apprehended; I believe you speak French pretty well, so remain in charge of the boat while I go up and take the first lodging I can find, and if any one asks you what we are, say that we are a privateer from the Isle of France."

"But why use any deceit, Bamboozle?" demanded Paul; "why not go to the authorities, inform them that we have escaped from on board a pirate, and at once give up Alibi and his detestable wretches to the law?"

"Hem! would that be exactly fair, Paul?" replied the Doctor; who knew that this was his friend's weak point, and had his own reason for desiring that Alibi should not be brought before any judicial power.

"Besides," continued he, "we have already severely punished him in the very mode which we adopted for our escape."

"Why certainly, Doctor, there is something in that; then you propose to let Alibi find out the trick we have played him by our continued absence, and so afford the villain an opportunity of putting to sea?"

"Exactly, Paul, that was the very plan which I have been cogitating; don't you think that will be more equitable after all, than bringing to the gallows the man to whom you owe your life, and whose bread we have both been eating for the last month or two?"

"Well, I admit there is something that sounds like an argument in what you say; and yet my heart misgives me sadly at the prospect of loosing on society so black a villain as we know him to be. Suppose now, for instance, we had sisters or relations crossing the sea—what scoundrels we should hold those men to be, who by sparing such a miscreant gave him an opportunity of working the iniquity which Alibi and his bloodhounds perpetrated on board the unfortunate merchantman!"

"Yes, but remember he has wrought you no harm. As I said before, you owe your life to him, nor do you know that he would not have

been ready to have set you ashore the moment you asked the matter at his hands. However, while I go and secure lodgings, turn the question over in your own mind, in the meanwhile I may as well take with me a few of my traps;" and Bamboozle, loaded with nearly every bundle he had brought ashore, set off among the narrow streets that led down to the water-side where their boat was lying. While Paul was ruminating on the course which his duty dictated, Bamboozle's hints had time to take effect in a kind nature like his. The longer the period that mercy had to plead, the more certain was she of triumph, and in twenty minutes, when Bamboozle returned, he had reluctantly made up his mind to resign to Heaven the task of punishing Alibi's enormities in its own proper time; he preferring the duty of gratitude to that of justice, if this was a failing it is one which certainly leaned to virtue's side, and for which his youth must be responsible. On the return of his acquaintance the Doctor however, he could not help feeling, in some degree, the shame of his softness, and very reluctantly admitted the relenting at which he had arrived. Bamboozle received the announcement as a matter of course, as though it could not have gone otherwise, and then, infinitely to Paul's surprise, proposed that they should both row back to the schooner.

"For what earthly purpose," demanded our hero; "to be captured and detained?"

"Oh, there is not the slightest chance of that."

"But I see a very considerable chance of that; so, Doctor, my fixed resolve is, never to return to her."

In vain Bamboozle tried by every argument in his power to turn our hero from this very prudent resolution, but Paul plainly observing in Bamboozle's manner some hidden design, which from motives of his own he did not choose to disclose, our hero as resolutely resolved not to come into any such folly, and therefore remained inflexible. At last, when the other perceived the futility of trying to lead Paul blindfold, he condescended to explain what was the real object he had in view, namely, that having counted over the bag of doubloons, which he had already secured, he found it to contain so large a sum, namely, about eight thousand pounds English, that he could not resist returning to the schooner in the hopes of capturing the other, and thereby making himself, as he termed it, comfortable for life. On hearing this proposition so coolly expressed, it required all Paul's strongest efforts of philosophy to keep within bounds the indignation which he felt in having such a proposition made to him, and the contempt which he entertained for the maker. However, conscious that he was in the same boat with Bamboozle, and, what was more, without much chance unfortunately of being speedily freed of such mateship, he confined his wrath to the most indignant refusal of any participation in a matter of such more-than-questionable honesty; and having again and again vainly tried to induce Bamboozle himself to resign it, but without effect, the Doctor expressed his determination of setting off for the schooner alone, for the purpose, as he said, of "spoiling the Amalekites." Never for a moment believing that this threat was based on anything like

an earnest intention, and in fact altogether doubting that the Doctor was sufficiently master of the oar to venture on such an expedition, Paul replied, "You're perfectly welcome to go by yourself, but no power on earth shall draw me into any such expedition."

"Very good," replied Bamboozle; and getting into the jolly-boat, to the great amusement of Paul, who expected to see him after the first dozen strokes give up in despair, old Bam., with more valour than prudence, coolly proceeded onward on his route towards the schooner. Paul stood on the jetty watching the Doctor labouring with the heavy sea, and utterly forgetful of every other consideration than that degree of wonder which filled his mind as to the magical charms of money, to obtain which, men could perpetrate atrocities such as he knew Alibi and his crew had recently committed on the one hand, and Bamboozle under his own eyesight was running risks on the other, at last, after very great labour, he beheld the Doctor gain the schooner's side, and get on board.

"There he is," cried our hero; "the old blue-bottle fly has thrust his head into the spider's web, and let him get out of that if he can."

Strong as were the misgivings that Paul entertained as to the safe return of Bamboozle from the schooner, he nevertheless had sufficient faith in the cunning of the Doctor to be fully convinced that if any one could escape so much peril, it would be his old and wily acquaintance of medical memory. Curious to watch the issue of the attempt, for the first half-hour that Paul remained watching on the sea-shore he considered it an equal chance whether the Doctor would get back or not; but when forty minutes had elapsed since the little boat gained the pirate's side, and still no symptoms of his return became apparent, our hero more than suspected that the Doctor was for once outwitted. Every passing moment lent strength to this supposition; presently Paul beheld the north-countryman appear on deck and veer the jolly-boat astern: and this was very ominous; a few seconds more elapsed and our hero was scarcely able to believe his own senses when the bulky form of Alibi slowly emerged from the hatchway, and, if the distance permitted Paul to observe rightly, Bamboozle came up after him, and as our hero thought, proceeded under a show of violence from the other two to assist in getting the schooner under way. But this might have been a mere delusion of the imagination: that the pirate actually did make sail and stand out to sea, Paul could not for a moment doubt, since his own eyesight afforded unquestionable evidence of the fact, while several other figures appearing upon the deck assured him in an equally indubitable manner that the pirates had discovered the danger which threatened them, and living or dying had made the last effort to avert it. That the imminent peril which threatened them had also greatly improved their health, and given strength to limbs which before were deemed powerless, was manifest in the hoisting up the jolly-boat in a very decent style. The French men-of-war took no notice of the schooner's departure; and in the course of a brief time, during which Paul was struggling in much agitation between his desire to inform the authorities and his doubt as to Bamboozle's position, he beheld his late vessel once more

diminish on the horizon, and himself left utterly friendless and destitute upon a foreign and unknown land.

We have all had the misery, at some period or another, to experience the torments of sleep when surrounded in our dreams with every species of horror: we have all experienced the intense delight—almost worthy of being purchased at the frightful price paid for it—of finding ourselves restored to safety; just so did our hero feel when he watched the sail of Alibi fading in the distance. A frightful incubus of crime and atrocity was in a moment removed from the breast where it had pressed so heavily, although without one single hope of existence on which he could count securely, one friend to whom he could unbosom the passing sorrows of the time, or any of those usual comforts without which we are accustomed to consider life unbearable; yet, under all these disadvantages, Paul clasped his hands in mute ecstacy at his deliverance, and acknowledged a greater joy and a deeper gratitude than he had ever experienced in life before. At last then he was —free; what a concentration of all imaginable happiness lay centred in that word! The sentence of death which still rendered him an outcast from his own land, the ties of relationship, all seemed alike forgotten in the delight of his escape; and confident that the crisis of his sorrow was past, and fortune about to shine on him more kindly, he sat down upon a rock from which Bamboozle had so lately shoved off the jolly-boat, and enjoyed the mute gratification of seeing the schooner grow gradually less and less, and at last sink into the dim misty line of the horizon; then he knew they could trouble him no more. With all his faults, now that Paul himself was safe, he could not help bestowing a passing regret upon the fate of the unhappy Bamboozle. Carried to sea amid a set of men whom he at once feared and hated, nothing could well be more miserable than the Doctor's position; they would naturally distrust his every step; every look would be watched, and perhaps when he had served the purposes of the miscreants sufficiently long, violence might terminate at once his hopes and his captivity; but still as Paul could not help perceiving that all these disasters had befallen the Doctor from his own want of principle, our hero consoled himself with this reflection, and then finding the pangs of hunger growing rather urgent, he bethought himself of the necessity of taking some steps to secure a breakfast; Paul now remembered that Bamboozle had secured lodgings before he went so foolishly back to the schooner, but as our hero had no money to pay for these, it was idle to attempt discovering them; it was true that in all probability Bamboozle had at these lodgings left that money which he had so questionably taken from the pirates; but disinclined as Paul would at any time have been to use such funds, this disinclination was not in any way removed by the fate which had overcome his late companion. The ills of being left in such destitution would at any other period of his life have driven our friend almost to madness; now they were unable to afford him one uneasy thought; and fully confident of quick success he moved onwards to the town. It very often happens in life that some kind destiny watching over us imparts to our minds in prosperity some particular taste or

acquirement which, when fortune frowns on us, becomes of the greatest value; and the more regulated and active the mind may be, the more probable is the occurrence. Thus at the very time of which we are writing, when those terrible commotions in France drove so many of her most prosperous children into banishment and poverty, an illustrious emigrant supported by the labours of tuition a life that was afterwards to found a fresh dynasty in France, and become a mark for the solicitude of every crowned head in Europe*. Thus, when no cloud had shadowed the rising hopes of our hero, he had always shown a passion for languages, which Sir Job Periwinkle, aware of their unfailing utility, had fostered to the utmost: little dreaming that while he contemplated his son's future capability of correcting his own foreign clerks, those acquirements would in reality be called into exercise to procure that son daily bread on a shore so distant that the great name of Periwinkle had never reached it. Such, however, was to be the fact, and as Paul proceeded on his course, he observed his appearance attract the attention of several passers-by, and what was more material, he heard the observations which were made upon it. Sundry doubts were expressed as to the genuineness of his Gallicism, various inquiries and conjectures were bandied to and fro on the quarter from which he had come; and one fellow, to Paul's horror, went so far as to suggest that he must be a spy. Under this verbal artillery our friend hardly knew how to act; if he quickened his pace, that very action would go to condemn him, while by loitering in an unsuspicious manner the integrity of his pace would only subject him to redoubled remark; great therefore was his joy when he gradually found himself mixing with the population of the town, thereby losing his identity in their numbers, and more especially on turning an angle of the street to hear the rude but familiar and still more welcome sounds of "D—n my eyes."

"That's good English!" exclaimed Paul, "if ever I heard any;" and darting forward to see who could be the speaker, he ran against as fair a specimen of John Bullism as any man could reasonably expect to meet at such a distance from the original manufactory. Not venturing to address the exclaiming party however until he saw a little more of his character, our hero drew up within a few yards of the Englishman, for such Paul had no doubt he was, and pretended to be busily engaged looking into a grocer's window, where sundry bottles of liqueurs, preserves, and other unconsidered trifles, appealed most severely to a man who had taken no breakfast. The intense interest, with which Paul listened to any further utterance of his countryman, had the power of throwing quite into the shade all the attractions of the *épicerie*.

"What a confounded set of ignorant rascals these Frenchmen are!" mumbled the angry Briton; taking off his broad-brimmed straw hat, and rubbing his sconce as if in a state of very great perplexity: seemingly quite forgetful that his ignorance was even still greater than that of the Frenchmen of whom he complained.

"I'd be bound I might walk here, there, and everywhere, before I could lay hold of the sort of man I want. One would

* Louis-Philippe.

think the Dutch isn't such an unlarnable language as that nobody should know it."

"Did I understand you to say you wanted somebody that could speak the Dutch language?" timidly asked Paul, turning to the complainant beef-eater.

"Halloa, Britisher, what do you do here?" was the ready and astonished reply of the Englishman.

"Why, sir, at present, I do nothing, but I hope soon to do more, or I shall very soon do less;" and Paul laid his hand over the tenderest portion of the human frame.

"Did you say you could speak the Dutch language?"

"Why I do know a little of the Dutch, but the German I am well acquainted with; and I doubt not that the persons for whom you require an interpreter will so far understand it as to meet me half way."

"Well maybe, as you understand German, you don't understand the French lingo; for unfortunately, you see I want a sort of chap who might have mixed the mortar at the tower of Babel. Here's a list of the languages you must speak, for the fact is—By the way, my boy, can you write as well as speak?"

"O yes, sir," said Paul, very moderately, "I think I can answer for that."

"Very well, my boy, then as I was going to say, here's a regular list of the lingoes:" giving one into the hand of Paul, who glancing his eye over the paper, found that this catalogue of tongues comprised Dutch, Spanish, French, and English.

"Can you manage those?" demanded his new acquaintance.

"I have little doubt of it," was our hero's answer; for in everything but the Dutch he was a proficient.

"Well then, my name's Dick Brown, and if you'll come along with me, I'll introduce you to my employer, who wants somebody to log down the proceedings of a bankrupt's court-martial—Van Scamp, do you know the fellow? he is what they call a general marchant, which means a fellow what swindles everybody right and left; he has left us nothing but what I call melancholy satisfaction."

"What's that?" said Paul, somewhat interested.

"What is it?" returned the other; "why in course it's infernal loss of time and trouble in making useless inquiries. But perhaps this Van Scamp is a friend of yours, and I may be hurting your feelings by these remarks of mine?"

"Oh, not at all, not at all; I don't even know the individual you allude to; though I must confess I know the family, which I think is rather a large one."

"Very much so; there's a very large family of them over the other side of the island, where this one comes from; but they I think are principally in the hardware line," said the other, mistaking Paul's sarcasm for a sober matter of fact.

"Indeed, sir!" said Paul, not taking the trouble to explain himself any further; and in a few minutes they both arrived at the house of what his friend termed his governor. The latter was a much more civi-

lised sort of being than his *employé*, the latter being simply an English captain of a trading-vessel, and the governor the American merchant from whose house he sailed. Paul now found his services were required as translator and amanuensis at a meeting of the creditors of a Dutch bankrupt, bearing the very ominous and not unapt name of Van Scamp. Having been engaged as a general merchant in a large way of business, the Dutchman had contrived to let in the inhabitants of various countries resident in his neighbourhood, and thus arose the necessity for a sort of dragoman amanuensis. The natural curiosity of a Yankee speedily desired to know from Paul whence he came, who he was, and in short everything connected with him.

Our hero had seen enough of romance and invention to be now perfectly disgusted with them, and he therefore very candidly gave to his inquirers almost an exact account of Alibi and his schooner, and the partially successful escape of himself and Bamboozle. Truth, like a golden coin, always bears about it undeniable evidence of its own value, and notwithstanding the fact of Paul having come from another country, the American merchant seemed to feel considerable compassion for our hero's youth and trials; telling him, if he discharged his duty well, he should not want for employment in that island, he considerately asked Paul whether he had broken his fast yet, and on hearing an answer in the negative, ordered him a meal that to Paul's famished and sea-reared appetite seemed to comprise every luxury under heaven.

"Pray, may I ask," said our hero after the first ravenous onslaught, "what is the name of the island on which I am thus thrown?"

"Is it possible that you have not even this quantity of information respecting us?" said the other, who seemed to speak with as much surprise as if his was the only island in the West Indies; while Paul on the other hand put the question with as much *nonchalance*, as if the whole West Indies altogether formed a petty nook of the globe, scarcely worth considering.

"This, sir, I would have you to know," continued the American merchant, "is an island which must shortly rivet the attention of the whole civilised globe."

"Indeed, sir!" said Paul, only partially able to speak, from the degree of vigour with which he was attacking a delicious pine-apple.

"You quite surprise me by that information. Pray, may I ask what it's made of?"

"Why not green-cheese, sir," angrily replied the other; who seemed to feel his own dignity called in question by Paul's ignorance of those affairs, that were indeed objects of the most vital importance to himself.

However, Paul soon perceived his error, and making an apology sufficiently humble and polite to efface the effects of his previous ignorance, the American then detailed to him many of those points in the history of the island which have been already laid before the reader; and in conclusion stated the alarming fact, that the black slaves had broken out into insurrection in various parts of the island, and under different coloured chiefs, with whom the French authorities were of course at open war, but whom they had not hitherto been able to subdue, on

Mr. Cumberbatch's interview with the Bankrupt's examination

account of the numerous and rancorous divisions that prevailed among themselves. Paul naturally concluded from the fact of his employer being an American, that he would naturally lean towards the side of liberty; in this however he was mistaken; the former had resided on the island some years, and at his first coming had married the heiress of a rich French planter, whose prejudices he had inherited with his wealth: several large estates near to the town, where they then were, belonged to him. The American also let drop in the course of his conversation the fears which were entertained on every side, owing to the weakness of the government, lest the insurgents should march upon that city and put all the white population to the sword, as they had already done in other parts of the island. This was comfortable information for our hero!—to find that he had hopped as it were from the frying-pan into the fire; but he consoled himself with reflecting, that if he should thus meet his death, it would at any rate be an honourable and guiltless one; and therefore he had still reason to congratulate himself on escape from his quondam friends the pirates.

Breakfast being over, the merchant consulted his watch, and finding that the time for business had arrived, conducted our hero to the hotel where his services were required. In a large room which overlooked the sea, and the windows of which opened on a sort of trellis-work that permitted the entrance of the delicious breeze, Paul found assembled a motley congregation of all nations. The day was intensely hot, and the whole party seemed to be trying who could throw off from the surface of the skin the greatest quantity of warm water. Railroad locomotives were not then invented, or it would only have been necessary to have put the fat chairman in an uneasy chair at the head of a train of carriages, to have insured his steaming along beyond all competition. This individual was the American merchant, who was assisted in his labours by several other gentlemen present; and as it seemed to be the primitive rule of that assembly, that not more than five persons and three languages should speak and be spoken at once, and that the bankrupt should be called upon to give his answer before he understood the query to which it related, it may readily be conceived how great was the business done, and how very satisfactory its nature. As for Paul, he was almost torn to pieces by the demand made upon his powers of interpretation; while he could not but be infinitely amused at the eager anxiety with which the whole bevy of creditors regarded the unhappy Van Scamp. It was almost as though they expected the powerful influence of a tropical sun should cause a stream of virgin gold to start from the pores of his shining countenance. Nor less amusing on the other hand was the coolness with which the bankrupt replied to all the pressing inquiries of the parties he had swindled—he seemed a perfect master of humbug and evasion in every branch; and after some time thus fruitlessly employed, the meeting, which was one purely extra-judicial, and voluntary on the part of the creditors, was about to arrive at some resolution highly condemnatory of the bankrupt, when all parties present were startled from their propriety by the sudden thunder of artillery, accompanied by the rolling of drums and the shouts of men, the heavy tread of some

large and not far distant military body, the screams of women and children, and all the accompaniments of war.

"Mercy on us!" said the president, throwing down his pen, "can these be the insurgents marching on the city?" The question of itself suspended every other thought; and while perfect silence and still more perfect fright reigned in the breasts of all present, the shouts and tumult rolled gradually nearer and nearer, until at length one name was distinctly audible above all the rest.

"What cry is that we hear?" demanded the chairman; but the whole of his auditors seemed too much engaged in their own fears to make him any reply. Paul therefore, whose ears were very good, and his wish to be obliging equally perfect with his ears, strained the latter to the utmost to catch the watch-word shouted, but not very satisfactorily—

"They're crying something about an overture, sir."

"Good heavens! can it be possible?" replied the chairman. Paul certainly thought it was possible; nay more, he had his own impressions that it was a positive fact; but what there was so horrible in a musical people wishing for a particular overture our hero was at a loss to conceive. Anxious to inform himself, he ventured to make the inquiry by saying—

"Is there any harm in the piece of music which the mob desire?"

"Piece of music, young man!" replied the chairman; "they ask for no piece of music: they are shouting the name of that rebel scoundrel Toussaint l'Ouverture, the black-hearted hypocrite, who pretends to be fighting for what he calls his suffering brethren, and perpetrates the blackest enormities in the name of religion. Mercy on us, what's to be done?" and the chairman in his extremity had recourse to a favourite trick when oppressed by any weighty question, that namely of wiping his spectacles.

"What is to be done, gentlemen? I say, shall we adjourn this meeting?" Perceiving no reply, the chairman had placed his glasses upon his nose, and looked round the room, but lo! no one save Paul and the imperturbable Van Scamp remained before him. The last solitary particle of a creditor that was visible to the distressed vision of the chairman was just the fly of a Frenchman's peaked coat, as in the extremity of his horror its owner clambered over a row of palings at the bottom of the garden, which the window of the room commanded.

"Well, Van Scamp," sighed the deserted chairman, "it's no use keeping you here, now all your creditors are gone. You may therefore consider this meeting as adjourned *sine die*."

"Ver goot," said the Dutchman, with the most infinite *sang-froid*; and taking up his hat without the utterance of another word, nor even removing his hands from his pockets, the Hollander marched out at the door.

"D—n me, that's what I call taking it cool," said the chairman, who seemed somewhat wroth at this specimen of the Dutchman's philosophy.

"It's a part of their national character, sir," said Paul.

"I don't want to be told that," replied the chairman, exhibiting evident marks of a ruffled temper, which, however, was speedily explained by the remark which followed.

"You wouldn't think, sir, to see the blackguard marching out in that way, that he's cheated me out of eleven thousand dollars?" Of course, Paul said that he should not; and this being the reply that the American wanted, he exhibited signs of being somewhat pacified by Paul's discrimination in making it, and was about to enter into some explanation of the why and wherefore he had trusted Van Scamp to so large an extent, when the noise of rapid feet was heard without, the door suddenly burst open, and the landlord, pale and breathless, rushed into the room, exclaiming,

"Hide, hide yourselves, if you value your lives! the blacks, I hear, are in full force, and slaughtering on all sides, without respect to age or sex."

"Where shall we fly?" cried the naturally excited chairman, whom Paul, in the midst of all his danger, could scarcely forbear laughing at, when he contemplated for a moment the flying of such an immense body in any direction whatever.

"Fasten the windows, I hear them in the garden. Fasten the windows, or we are lost! I have barred the house up on the other side, so they may perhaps think it's deserted."

On hearing this frightful intelligence, Paul needed no solicitation to lend his utmost assistance, and darting to the window, he closed and secured both bolt and bar with infinite rapidity, though sorry to observe that the light fastenings used in that climate were of a species wholly uncalculated to repel the slightest application of force. This, however, was not contemplated, since the appearance of a deserted house was the main protection on which they relied. Scarcely had Paul discharged the voluntary but efficient service he had taken upon himself, when he heard by the footsteps and shouts in the garden without that the enemy were already on the premises. The terror of the worthy American now became extreme. In the faint light which struggled through the cracks of the shutters, Paul could perceive the old man wring his hands, calling out in the utmost bitterness—

"Good God! what will become of my wife and children! They know I am a loyalist and a large proprietor. Heaven have mercy on me, I am lost."

"Hush, hush," whispered the landlord, putting forth his hand so as to stop these imprudent exclamations; "you forget they are within the garden; follow me to a hiding-place, and all may yet be well."

"My wife and child, my wife and child!" cried the planter in reply, as if his mind was utterly unable to embrace any other idea.

"Pluck your heart up, never say die!" whispered Paul, who entertained the true Englishman's notion, of having at least a fight for the victory. "It's never too late to despair;" and taking the left arm of his employer under his own, while his landlord supported him by the right, they thus bore the agonised American to the door. Just as they were on the point of leaving the room, they heard the application of the enemy's muskets to the window without; and this so totally overcame

the nerves of the late chairman, that after an effort of repeating his former cry of "My wife and children!" he fainted.

"Poor soul, that's the best thing that could have happened to him," said the landlord. "Help me to bear him along, sir, and we'll soon get him into a place of safety, if any place is safe in these sad days." Following the landlord's instructions, Paul half dragged the fainting man until they got him outside the room where the bankrupt's examination had been held, when the landlord hastily locking the door, the little party hurried on as quietly as possible to the cellarage of the hotel. Hurrying down a flight of stone steps, and locking one or two doors behind them, Paul in a few minutes found himself in a large magazine, the artillery of which had been laid up for a very different purpose than the present horrible emergency. Goodly rows of long claret necks, interspersed with bins of other wines, rose tier above tier on every side, and on gaining this retreat—the refreshing coolness of which made it seem like a perfect paradise—they found burning the perpetual lamp that lit this shrine of Bacchus.

"We haven't much breathing time—this will be the chief point of attack," said the host to Paul, motioning him to lay the senseless American at his length along the ground.

"Then why in the name of fortune bring us here," returned our hero, not at all sorry to be temporarily rid of the heavy burden of his unfortunate employer, "if this is to be the chief point of attack? Would it not have been far wiser to have hid ourselves at as great a distance as possible from it?"

"No," replied the host, snatching up a bottle full of wine and a small hammer that lay near it, and dexterously decapitating at a single stroke the former, a portion of whose contents he hastened to pour down the throat of the American, "in any other part of the house we should have been the objects sought—here the rascals will come only to intoxicate themselves with wine: all search will be over before they break in here, and then they will have other objects to engross them."

"But how can we escape, when they must see us the moment they enter?" naturally enough demanded our hero.

"I have arranged that," said the other, with a smile of confidence that threw more light over that gloomy dungeon than the lamp which illumined it.

By this time the American had returned to a consciousness of what was going on around him, and opening his mouth, the landlord naturally concluded that he was about to call on the only people who could not help him, namely, his wife and children; checking, therefore, the worse than useless expression of his affection, mine host beckoned his two companions across the cellar to a little gate, composed of the slightest materials, and which opened into another vault, filled as Paul had at first supposed with empty wine-bottles. The landlord, however, who had lit a torch at the lamp burning in the first cellar, now pointed his companions' attention to a ladder which led over the rack of empty bottles, and up which mine host moving very rapidly, disappeared on the other side, making a motion to Paul to follow him. This our hero quickly

did, and the more rapidly, because his ready ear detected overhead indubitable signs of the enemy breaking into the cellar. Having mounted himself, his next effort was directed to the assistance of the planter, whom he had the happiness of helping over, with no more material drawback than a few slight cuts from bottles he had kicked and broken on his road. They had now left behind them the lamp burning in the cellar, and between the interstices of the bottle-racks over which they had clambered, they could very well perceive everything that passed behind them in the vault they had just quitted, while our hero, partly by this admitted light, and partly by the rude torch which the landlord bore, discovered around him an arched and bricked passage, whose termination was lost in gloom. The host no sooner saw that his friends were safe within the covered way than he mounted to the top of the artificial barricade, which they had passed by means of a pair of steps placed for the purpose, and drawing over the ladder which had rendered such essential service, committed both these means of escalade to the custody of our hero, and quickly led the way along the subterraneous passage.

"Heaven have mercy upon us!" sighed the American, as they quickly hurried along its devious windings, "I do believe those rascally blacks have broken into the cellar already. Oh! what a place this is to die in."

"Can't be very comfortable to die in, but a very good place to be buried in," added Paul, who distinctly heard the crash of the yielding cellar-door behind them: the very sound seemed to strike silence into the heart of the talkative American, who followed his conductor, beating his bosom in mute despair, and looking back every moment as if he expected the reeking dagger of some revengeful black to be guided over his shoulder into his palpitating heart. Such remorseless deeds of unnecessary bloodshed had been perpetrated on both sides, that the American knew too well how ready the first of his captors would have been to put to ransom a large proprietor like himself; conscious, as in all probability he was, of not having used his own day of success with too much moderation. In a few seconds our friends arrived at a flight of steps, and having descended these with some care, Paul was not a little surprised to find himself within an enormous vault, whose thick-ribbed arches of stone totally excluded every ray of light. The end of this artificial cavern there was not light enough for him to observe, but on one side of it a large crucifix had been hastily propped up against the wall, and at its foot were kneeling a small group of females, who proved to be the wife and daughters of the landlord. On hearing the entrance of our friends, they all rose from the ground, and rushing towards him, embraced his person with a degree of affection and excitement which at once betrayed their relationship.

"Ah, if my defenceless ones had but such a retreat as this!" said the unhappy American, bursting into tears, and exhibiting the utmost agony.

"Rude as it is, it has cost us weeks to prepare," said the Frenchman. "I have long thought the fools of governors would leave us no resource

but such a miserable refuge, and I am only happy we have even this to offer you."

Plunged in his own melancholy reflections, which the sight of his host's blooming girls seemed to have quickened into more poignant life, the American made no reply, but, seating himself on the ground, buried his face in his hands, and gave vent to the most passionate flow of grief. Both the landlord and Paul were equally distressed at witnessing his anguish, but seeing that all their arguments failed to console, they judged it best to let the fit wear out its own violence. The shouts and cries of the blacks, who as the host had prophesied had evidently broken into the cellar, and were now feasting on its contents, rang in fearful echoes along the vaulted passage, but they were seemingly too deep in their drunken revels to have their attention aroused by the echoes these created. At first, every fresh shout of their brutal enjoyment seemed to curdle the very blood within the heart of those who heard them : by degrees, however, this feeling wore off, and Paul's eyesight becoming accustomed to the gloom of the dungeon, began to trace out its boundaries, and remark on the peculiar character of its walls. At every ten paces, Paul observed large iron staples in the massive wall, to which were attached huge rings of the same metal, with small fragments of chains hanging to them, all mouldering and falling to pieces with the rust of years. Struck by so singular an appearance in the cellar of an hotel, Paul was advancing to examine some of these chains more minutely, when the landlord, springing forward, seized his arm and dragged him back, saying,

"Hold, where are you stepping? Another moment, and you would have fallen into the deep," lowering his torch, so as to display a frightful chasm at their very feet.

"The deep! what in the name of fortune is that? Has this cellar any communication with the sea?" demanded Paul.

"None whatever," whispered the landlord; "the deep is merely the name given to the lowest dungeon. There, can't you see it before you?" and as the man spoke he lowered his torch until its light fell upon a hideous, black abyss, the slimy sides of which glistened in reflection of the light now thrown upon them.

"What, in the name of everything that's horrible, is the use of that?" demanded our hero, starting back.

"It was the last punishment for disaffected slaves who wouldn't work, and is half filled at this very time with their mouldering skeletons, scorpions, mosquitoes, cock-roaches, and every other abominable reptile that would live there. I had intended to have got it boarded over, but we hadn't time."

"Do you mean seriously to assert, that living beings were ever imprisoned in such a spot?"

"Ay, sir, more than either you or I can dream of. At one time there used to be a place like that on many slave estates in the island."

"But I thought this was an hotel."

"So *now* it is; but it has seen other days, and was for years the residence of a large proprietor, and afterwards the head-quarters of his

chief overseer. When slaves grew so refractory on the country estate that their examples were dangerous, they were brought into town, and imprisoned here; every staple that you see in those walls could, if it had language to speak, repeat the death-groans of those it has enchained."

"To whom *then* did this frightful dungeon belong?" asked Paul, shuddering at the information he had received. His informant bent his head downward, as if the intelligence was to be more than ordinarily secret; Paul stooped forward to listen, and the landlord pointing to the prostrate form of the American, answered—

"To the father-in-law of that very man you see yonder. In right of his wife, for whom you hear he is so much concerned, he inherited these premises, and let them to me as an hotel. I had a hint of the outbreak that was coming, and so have been enabled to prepare for it."

"Strange retribution," muttered our hero in reply, "that the very scene of his father-in-law's iniquity should now prove his only place of refuge!"

"So it is; but still more marked is the fact, that the child of the proprietor who used to imprison his unhappy slaves would perhaps, at the very moment we are talking, gladly resign all his ill-gotten wealth for the precarious safety of her father's dungeon."

"Alas," sighed the Frenchman, "I tremble to think what horrible fate she may be undergoing; for"—and here the Frenchman's words died into the faintest sounds—"both she and her husband have unfortunately acquired a character for great pride—an *hauteur*, which will not I fear be forgotten now the reckoning-day has arrived; though I am sure I ought to speak kindly of them, for Madame has taken a fancy to my youngest child, and educated it, I may say, with her own. Thank Heaven, the little thing is here amidst all these horrors: I wish her protectress could have shared the same shelter." At this moment, through the arched passages that led to the first cellar, was suddenly heard a commingled burst of sound, which almost made the heart grow still. Such a melancholy chorus of cries, imprecations, and shrieks of agony, Paul had never before believed it possible for the human voice to produce. It was quite clear that some most terrific scenes of violence were enacting in the street close to the hotel, and that the sudden opening of some door had let in a flood of misery to the ears of the refugees, while, as if to render it still more horrible, with all these groans and cries for mercy were mingled the drunken shouts of revelry, evidently proceeding from the wretches who had taken forcible possession of the outer cellar, and become intoxicated with its plunder. No sooner did this unhappy burst of sounds reach the ears of the American planter, than starting from the ground on which he had before lay writhing, he made a rush back to the entrance by which the whole party had come in, exclaiming as he darted along, "Oh, my wife! my wife and child."

"Merciful Heaven, would you ruin us all!" energetically whispered the landlord, springing forward, seizing him by the shoulder, and forcibly arresting his progress.

"Are you a human being, and do you attempt to stop my flying to the rescue of those who have such claims upon me?" demanded the other, "do you not hear those shrieks?"

"And if I do, of what possible avail can your single arm be to help the sufferer? do you imagine the drunken, infuriated mob of negroes will allow you to reach your house in safety? you will only be slaughtered on its threshold, and thus call attention and vengeance down on those who perhaps are now overlooked or in a place of safety."

"They cannot be overlooked, how should it be possible! when for the last six months you know I have been receiving anonymous threats in every direction; and as to their being in a place of safety, my house is a modern one, and has no stronghold like this; do not detain me another moment, it is my duty, I must go."

"But at any rate it is not your duty to involve others in your own ruin; if you do not choose to believe that you are throwing away your own life in the attempt, at least open your eyes to the fact that you are sacrificing every person here;" and the host pointed as he spoke to those around him.

"He must not, he cannot have the barbarity, nay he shall not be permitted to depart," said the landlord's wife, rushing forward as soon as she understood the question in debate; "does he think that I am to see my daughters abused, and then butchered by the drunken slaves before my face, because he doesn't happen to know his own mind; he should have thought of the danger of his family before he consented to save his life by sharing our retreat, and not when he has taken every advantage of it make our kindness to him the means of giving our throats to the knives of the drunken negroes." Then, as she saw that her powerful arguments had weight even with the mind of the agonised American, she added, as she pointed along the passage, "How can you ever expect to reach your wife and children when those black beasts whom you now hear carousing a few yards off would take a pleasure in ploughing your very heart with the broken bottles they have just drained; if you must be so mad as to leave the place where you are so safe, wait at least till the wine has made the wretches insensible, it cannot be long first; and then perhaps we may find some means of getting your wife and child hither; when once those drunken brutes have emptied our cellar, they'll never trouble themselves with any further search."

The American, on hearing this attempted consolation, wrung his hands as if uncertain in the midst of his perplexities how to act, and then turning to his host, eagerly demanded, "Can we not see whether they are still in the way—is there no means of observing who is in the outer cellar?"

"Certainly," replied the landlord, "if you will consent to be reasonable, I and this gentleman," pointing to Paul, "will step forward and see what's going on."

Obliged to receive this small instalment of his desires, the frantic American once more flung himself on the ground, as if to exclude those sounds which horrified him, while Paul and the landlord, using the utmost caution, gently crept along the arched vault, and on arriving at the

barricade of bottles, endeavoured to find a peep-hole through which to observe the enemy, whose oaths and songs they could as distinctly hear as if they had themselves formed a part of the drinking party. At least a dozen negroes were seated round the ground armed with every species of weapon, and lighted apparently by every candle they could find in the house, the latter being thrust into the lips of broken bottles. Their cups formed from the same resource, and thus they were drinking in the most curious manner all the best wines that the cellar afforded ; their mouths and hands bleeding profusely from the contact with the sharp glass, and the blood mingling with the intoxicating liquors which they drank. To render the scene still more disgusting if possible, five or six negro women were partakers in these orgies, and were either severely wounded by their own carelessness amid the innumerable splinters lying and flying around, or else had been partakers in still more atrocious excesses in the town above. The uproar of cries and screams that were audible at this more advanced post had now become so horrible, from the fact of all the doors in the hotel being left open, that Paul was really but too glad to get back to the comparative silence of the large vault, where on telling the American how completely blockaded was every avenue of escape, he gave way to a despair so bitter that every one present became more or less partakers in his anguish. Throwing himself on the ground, he endeavoured to suppress the hearing of those sounds from without, and alternately called upon the names of those for whom he was so much interested, and accused himself with the most bitter acrimony of neglect and cruelty of having in the first moment of self-preservation forgotten the relations who had so large a claim upon his consideration. In vain Paul and the rest stood round the unhappy man imploring him to moderate his anguish, or at least to be more guarded in the expressing of it, since the state of frenzy under which he laboured was such that his brother sufferers momentarily dreaded that his moanings would be overheard, and the effects of his indiscretion wreaked upon themselves. On this point however he appeared perfectly delirious ; one moment he acknowledged his folly, promised to guard against its recurrence, and the very next instant grew more obstreperous than ever; at last a sudden shriek from the streets without in a female voice thus far overcame all prudence that he burst into an exclamation of anguish so loud that every one in the vault felt perfectly convinced that it must have been overheard by the wassailers. In an instant they all flew towards the planter, and in a whisper whose earnestness carried with it the life and death which seemed to hang on its appeal, implored the unhappy man not to betray them all to the worst of deaths by his insane grief; but while they were yet speaking, a terrific shout rang through the arches of the vault, a crash followed, as if the whole masonry of the place had given way above them, and then the heavy tread of hasty feet, the bellowing of oaths, the wild infuriate screams of negro joy, and the flashes of approaching light, all told the tale of what had happened.

"Heaven have mercy on us !—we are discovered !" cried the unhappy mother, throwing herself before her children as the whole troop of drunken slaves, led by the negro women, came reeling in, brandishing

their lights aloft with furious exultation, all of them in a perfect state of nudity, and bleeding from head to foot with the gashes they had inflicted on themselves in throwing down and scrambling over the barricade of glass; while to crown the horrors of the hour, every man and woman among the negroes bore one of those large fearful weapons, something between a scimitar and a carving-knife, which are generally used in cutting down the sugar canes, and which were already reeking in the vital current of those whom they had massacred in the street above. To spring forward and interpose his unarmed body between this troop of demons and the unfortunate women who were thus exposed to those horrors they most dreaded was the immediate and generous act of our hero, while the panic-stricken American, whose folly had called down all this evil upon the heads of those to whom his life was owing, appeared too panic-stricken to decide on any line of conduct whatever. Not so however the French landlord; uttering a bitter malediction on the head of his friend, he hastily seized the arm of his wife, and pointing to his daughters to precede them, ran nimbly round on the other side of the frightful chasm, into which Paul had so nearly fallen, whispering as he did so to our hero—

"Dodge them nimbly, sir, and if we mind what we are at we shall trap some of them into the deep."

Paul heard the caution, and determining to act upon it, fixed his eyes steadily upon the advancing negroes; the latter startled at finding themselves in the presence of so many people, when they imagined they were the sole occupants of the house, paused for a moment in their furious career, and then with renewed shouts rushed on.

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## CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

### THE PLEASURES OF A LANDSMAN'S CRUISE IN THE WAR TIME.

We left, if we mistake not, our friends Sir Job Periwinkle and party in a position not unattended with some disagreeable circumstances; and at the time of which we write, these were far more frequent and easy of encountering than folks who live in times of peace can readily imagine; it is only fair then that our story should so far revert to the sufferers as to mark what, under these circumstances, befel them. During the whole of the day which succeeded the brilliant sunrise at Spithead which we have endeavoured to describe, the barometer continued to give increasing signs of an approaching storm; the wind, which had gradually headed the enormous convoy until it finally settled in the south-west, multiplied by slow degrees in its power, until at noon it seemed to blow upon the ships with that loud snorting violence of which seamen have at all times particularly disapproved; signals were from time to time given out by the prudent admiral to shorten sail, until the whole mass of ships were to be seen under double and treble reefed top-sails, jib, and spanker, standing slowly down the channel, and endeavouring to keep

as large an offing as possible from the English or leeward shore. By degrees the heavens, which but a few hours previously had looked so bright, were now gradually obscured, patch by patch, as the dark leaden clouds vollied up from to windward, until the whole surface of the sky wore the same sad livery. The captain, who had been busily watching this change for the worse, and standing very moodily on the weather-side of the steerage-wheel giving his orders, now approached Doubtful, who was musing on the same spot, and opened the conversation with that subtle lawyer by saying, "I don't at all like this change of weather, Mr. —," but not being able at this point to recollect our friend's exact name, he saluted him with the very questionable compliment of "Mr. Doubleface." Had the captain been fully informed of Doubtful's manœuvres during the love-making dinner, when he set Sir Job and Lady Periwinkle by the ears, in order to get a fair opportunity of making love to their daughter, there might have been a good excuse perhaps for saluting Dick with this very questionable cognomen; but as the party to whom it was addressed did not feel particularly pleased on hearing it, he waited for its repetition to set the captain right, meanwhile replying to the natural assertion of the official, that he could readily imagine such a change in the weather as they had witnessed to be anything but pleasing "to a gentleman of your vocation." Now as the merchantman was wholly ignorant of what vocation meant, he felt very much inclined to take offence at this allusion to him, and nothing but hearing the word "gentleman" interfered with his so doing; after a pause, therefore, he consented to renew the conversation as follows:—

"No, Mr. Doubleface, I can't say I like this weather."

"Not Doubleface—Doubtful if you please," interposed Dick, with one of his blandest smiles.

"I beg your pardon, Doubtful is it? I knew it was either Doubtful or Doubleface, but knowing that they both mean much the same in English, I thought that Doubleface was the most straight-forward of the two, though it's natural enough a man should like to be called by the name his godfathers gave him."

"There is a prejudice that way, certainly," replied Dick, not a little piqued at the aspersions which had been thrown on his cognomen, "though I have met people in the world whose chief delight seems to be in calling people by every name but the right one."

"Very improper indeed, sir," replied the captain, who had not the most distant notion that he was the party alluded to; "however, sir, I was going to ask you if that stout gentleman that's lost his kit isn't always very unlucky."

"Why not always, for in the first place he has acquired a most magnificent fortune by his own efforts alone, and I must say I don't take that to be any very great sign of ill luck."

"Why no, sir, I can't say I think it is, but hasn't he been unlucky lately?"

"Well, perhaps," said Doubtful, "I think you may say he has."

"Ah!" sighed the captain with a heavy groan, "I was afeard of it, now mark my words, sir, you have heard him talk in that helter-

skelter way this morning, about being prepared for the worst, and so forth. See if we don't get into some infernal scrape before the day's done."

"Oh! this must surely be your fancy, the day is half over already, I had often heard that you sailors are superstitious, but I never knew you carried it to such a length as this."

"Superstitious, sir! Whoever says sailors are superstitious, understands nothing about it, but as for me I don't know what the thing means at all. But this we are, if you like, we're reasonable people, sir, and know that these things shouldn't be lightly talked about upon the open sea, that's the plain truth of it."

"Why not talked of upon the open sea as well as on the dry land? What's your reason?"

The captain shook his head, and made no further answer for some minutes; at length, after squinting in every direction for some time, he indulged Doubtful with a very solemn look, telling him it was no use to argue the matter. In this Doubtful was perfectly ready to concur, though perhaps from a very different reason from that of the captain.

"It's no use to argue the matter," said the latter, "but I suppose you wish well to the ship and her crew?"

"Of course I do, Captain Brown, how could you doubt it?"

"Then perhaps you can tell me whether that stout gentleman would have any objection to be put ashore at any place betwixt this and the Land's End?"

"Most decidedly," said Doubtful, most highly amused at such a proposition; "I should say he would have the very strongest objection to be put ashore at any place but the destination to which he intends going."

"Well, sir, do you think we couldn't, by a little management, contrive to drop him somewhere by accident as it might be?"

"Most decidedly not, Captain Brown, for he is as watchful and as wide awake as you are, and you'll only get yourself into a terrible dilemma by the attempt."

"Very well, sir, if that's the case you need never count upon this ship's getting safe to the end of her voyage, so mark my words, sir, and if she does, I give you leave to tell me that I know nothing about the matter."

"Well, can you give any reason for this strong opinion?"

"It's no use to argue the matter," said the captain, resigning himself to his former taciturnity; and Doubtful, finding that his friend was the very reverse of the man who had "reasons plenty as blackberries," was obliged to content himself with the absurdities he had heard, and go below to put Sir Job on his guard against being made a second Jonah. Sir Job, when the conversation was repeated to him, treated the matter as a perfect farce, but Doubtful, taking every bearing of the question, imparted considerable comfort to the patriarch's mind by pointing out the probability, in case Sir Job should fall overboard, of the captain not stopping to picking him up; an hypothesis which the other one met

by offering not to go on deck during the remainder of the voyage. Doubtful, however, persuaded him from taking such great precaution as this, and his health therefore had a lucky escape from such an imprisonment, while the old gentleman himself was put upon his parole that he would not fall overboard on any account or pretence whatsoever. A very good resolution certainly, for those who possess any power of keeping it. Fortunately the ladies of the party were not informed of the captain's scruples, or there is no saying whether Lady Periwinkle might not have joined in the suggestion of landing her spouse and self at the nearest port. Towards the evening as the gale increased, and the Captain from his surly manner displayed positive proofs how deeply the folly of his superstition had sunk into his mind, the question was raised between Doubtful, Wrynecker, and Sir Job, whether it would not be wiser, if any opportunity occurred, to shift the whole party into some other vessel bound for the same port, instead of confiding their lives and happiness to the care of the superstitious bigot, who however kind in his nature had evidently started under feelings of fear and distrust. This matter combining with Sir Job's loss of luggage, at once determined the question in the affirmative if any such opportunity should arrive. Meanwhile the gale increased, the sun went down, and during the night the wind shifting round to the southward produced such a frightful cross sea that the whole party of landsmen almost despaired of ever placing their feet on terra firma again. With the earliest breath of morning, Wrynecker, Sir Job, and Doubtful, scrambled on deck amid every possible discomfort. The horizon was still covered with a thick grey haze, the sea was a mass of foam on every side of them, the gale whistled through the rigging with fearful fury, blowing a perfect sheet of spray in their faces to such an extent as almost to preclude the observation of anything around; by dint of shading their eyes with one hand, while they secured themselves from the rolling of the ship with the other, they perceived the sails reduced to a mere treble-reef main-topsail, the helmsman lashed to the wheel, and the captain similarly secured to the weather hammock-netting, and all of them cased in dark tarpaulin dresses from which the water streamed in petty rivulets. The deck itself was as clean as a well-washed trencher, the ropes all contained little pools of salt water within their coils, spars and everything likely to be moved by the violence of the sea were secured in their places by strong lashings, and at every plunge of the vessel's bow vast quantities of the briny element came flooding aft from the forecastle.

"Mercy on us!" exclaimed Wrynecker, as he beheld this sight, "are we foundering or what?" For some seconds no one answered him, and then Doubtful took up the matter by saying,

"I think, Mr. Wrynecker, we must be '*what*,' for foundering is a quicker process."

"Oh, Mr. Doubtful," groaned Sir Job, "surely this is too awful a matter to make a jest of."

"Never mind, never mind," said Doubtful, forgetting the peculiar horror which his friend entertained of that odious expression.

"But I do mind," cried both in one voice, "for if I mistake not, here comes some water."

As Sir Job said this, he pointed to the forecastle, towards which his friends turning their eyes with considerable apprehension, beheld a dark green sea come pouring onwards, and before they could escape from its fury, they all found themselves borne with the helplessness of children, kicking, scrambling, and spitting the water from their mouths, half swimming and half sinking towards the stern, over which there was every apparent probability that they would be carried. Fortunately, however, Sir Job's bulky person came full butt against captain Simpson, who as we have already stated was lashed to the hammock nettings. This material obstacle brought Sir Job up by what is termed a round turn, for no sooner did he feel anything like an opposing body, than he clung to it most pertinaciously; while Wrynecker and Doubtful were simply dashed against the steerage wheel, and at the risk of having themselves reduced to their original atoms were thus saved from a watery grave. When the hubbub subsided, the captain released himself from the grasp of Sir Paul, and looking at the passengers with a mixed feeling, between laughter and vexation at the escape of Jonas, advised them if they wished for safety to lash themselves to the vessel.

"I think, sir, you might have told us that when you first saw us come up," said Doubtful, who felt both sore and angry.

"It's no business of mine," returned the captain, "to be anybody's nurse-maid. What business have you on deck, if you can't keep your own footing?"

"Well, perhaps we had better go below," suggested Dick, who felt that he was considerably out of his element.

"Indeed I shall do nothing of the sort," said Wrynecker, whose litigious breast was now on fire. "I have paid my passage money, and have quite as much right to the deck as the captain, or any other part of the proprietor's cargo."

"I'm quite of that opinion too," said Sir Job, who could not forgive the atrocious design of putting him on shore on the first opportunity; and Doubtful being unable to desert his friends, though sorely longing to retire to his dry cot, and dream again if possible of Julia, was obliged to lash himself to the mizen mast, and experience the fullest blessings of a south-wester. By degrees, as the sun gained a little strength above the horizon—though not the faintest beam was visible—and the eyes of our party became accustomed to the obstacles obstructing their vision, they caught slight glimpses of what remained from the immense convoy that only the day before had sailed with them from Spithead. Instead of groves of masts studded with canvas, that had before stretched out on every side, headed by a formidable squadron of men-of-war, they saw the yeasty surface of the sea, dotted here and there at long intervals with some twenty or thirty vessels, each labouring most heavily with the gigantic seas, and only able to spread to the gale one, two, or at most three close-reefed topsails. In the latter class were found none but men-of-war, while certain of the merchant vessels were lying, stripped of every shred of canvas, some with their topmasts struck, others with one or two of their masts rolled overboard, and a few reduced to the condition of perfect hulks, at the mercy of

every wave that broke its fury over them. One of the last Doubtful speedily descried on the weather-bow, and in the haze of morning she looked much larger than she really was, and rapidly drifted on board the Mary Jane. The tempest, as it howled first over the former and then the latter, bore to the ears of every one on deck cries of agony, which could only have proceeded from beings who considered themselves in the utmost extremity of danger. By degrees this floating log, for it could be called little better, approached within a few hundred yards, and then it was plainly perceptible that they were hailing the Mary Jane for help. Seeing that no one stirred to take the least notice of the cry, Wrynecker drew the attention of the captain to the fact, but the latter was too much incensed to pay any further observation to the remark, than such as an expressive shrug of the shoulders might convey. On came the helpless hull, and while every one strained their eyes to examine its deck as it drifted past the transport's weather-beam, our friends plainly detected the whole of the wretched passengers and crew, lashed in different parts of the vessel, stretching out their arms with looks of the utmost agony towards the transport, as if imploring by this attitude that assistance which the tempest would not allow them more distinctly to demand.

"Is there no possible way of helping those poor creatures?" repeated Wrynecker, shuddering as he contemplated the extreme look of agony which their aspect betrayed. The captain never troubled himself to make any reply; but the mate, who seemed to possess more of the milk of human kindness, answered as he stood at the helm—

"Nothing but a boat could assist them, and no boat whatever could live in such a sea. As far as we can judge from this distance, that craft appears to be water-logged already. Do you see how slow she sinks?" Wrynecker had already made the same remark to himself, since at every wave that broke over the unhappy vessel, she seemed to stagger from deck to kelson as if it required the utmost effort to rise again to the surface; while the miserable beings clinging on her decks, were plunged above their heads in salt-water at every roll she took. Among her crew too it was evident there were several females, and Wrynecker could distinctly perceive one with a child clinging to her breast, even as she remained lashed to the bulwarks.

"Surely, if we were to manage our helm rightly, we might put our bow near enough to that vessel to take those unfortunate people off," said Doubtful, addressing the captain.

"Yes," said the latter, "and go down ourselves in doing it."

"What is to become of those poor souls if we don't?" asked Sir Job. Before any answer could be returned to this question, a terrific shriek on board the water-logged vessel drew all eyes towards her, when the passengers and crew of the Mary Ann perceived a huge sea strike the wreck on the weather-bow and sweep completely over her. As, however, they had seen several do this before, they did not apprehend any immediate consequences from it. The vessel gradually settled lower and lower, until she came upon the transport's quarter; her deck being upon a level with the foam.

"Now she will begin to rise again," said the mate, as a weather-roll of the transport gave them full command of all that took place on the other's decks, where men, women, and children, were stretching out their arms towards the transport for that assistance, which no one was able to afford. For a moment the wreck became stationary, and then spars, timbers, men, and women, all gradually disappeared beneath the surface of the devouring element, and nothing but the cold white glaring surface of the foam reflected back the light to those horrified eyes, that had thus witnessed the perishing of so many fellow-creatures, almost within hail of the human voice.

"Why don't they rise?" said Wrynecker, turning to the mate, and utterly ignorant of what had occurred.

"They'll never rise till the last day now, sir."

"What! do you mean to say they've foundered?"

"Ay, sir, every soul of them."

"Mercy on us! and can you take the drowning of so many human beings with so much coolness?"

"Coolness!" interrupted the captain; "what's the use of breaking our hearts about a matter that may happen to ourselves within an hour?"

"And these are men!!" said Wrynecker. "Well, Mr. Doubtful, this is one view of humanity, but if I ever get safe out of this, and you catch me taking another on the high seas, may I be ——."

The oath which was in Wrynecker's mouth died away as he contemplated the awful scene around him, and breathing a deep sigh, he turned to Sir Job—

"As we have maintained the principle of our right to come on deck, I think we shall be just as happy in making up our minds to our fate below, as we shall be here."

Sir Job readily yielded his assent to this proposition, and cautiously unlashing themselves from their various securities, the unhappy passengers departed below, much better enabled to give a vote on navy estimates, and to discuss the question whether British seamen are under or over paid, than they had been twelve hours before.

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## CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

### AN AWKWARD CUSTOMER—A ROUGH "PROFESSION."

For several successive days the gale continued with unabated fury; one by one, Captain Brown had the pleasure of losing sight of those ships of the convoy which had at first been participators in the disasters of the tempest; the force of which had been so exceedingly violent as to have compelled the admiral in command to put back to Spithead, with the loss of an immense number of the vessels under his charge, while before he regained his anchorage he had the mortification of beholding numbers of them founder within view of his flag-ship, though utterly

unable to afford them the least assistance, like the vessel whose fate we have attempted to portray.

For a fortnight the whole line of shore in the neighbourhood of Portland Roads was constantly covered with dead bodies; no less than twelve hundred of which, mutilated by the force of the waves and half devoured by the inhabitants of the deep, were cast up within the short extent of a few miles along this part of the English coast. Of all these melancholy facts, the enlightened Captain Brown knew nothing; he, with the characteristic short-sightedness of his race, imagined that his ship had been selected for the special vengeance of old Neptune because one of the passengers had happened to speak rather lightly of the dangers of the deep, when in reality his ship had been specially preserved amid the violence of a hurricane, such as no living mariner ever remembered to have seen on our shores before. The want of this material information led to the worthy Captain Brown being extremely sulky; and like all sulky people, excessively disagreeable. He would scarcely speak to any of his passengers; and the latter therefore gladly anticipated any termination or interruption almost to their voyage. In this respect they certainly had their wish; for while quietly enjoying the luxury of their cots one bright morning, unembarrassed by any fear of danger, they were aroused by an unusual commotion upon deck, and on hurrying up, found themselves hotly chased by a low, black-hulled schooner, that sat as close upon the water as if it had been some mere wild bird of the element, while her masts raked so excessively that they appeared falling over her stern. On the moment that this vessel became clearly perceptible on board the transport, the consternation of Brown and Co. was excessive. The hurrying to and fro to accomplish nothing; the loading of little pop-guns that might have exploded in a man's pocket without doing the bearer much injury; the spying and cursing one's luck and looking out for assistance, the arrival of which was as improbable as any escape; all these matters would have proved highly amusing to any unconcerned spectator with any knowledge of nautical affairs. To our friends, however, against whom the charge of being unconcerned can be as little brought as the crime of possessing any naval experience, affairs wore a very serious aspect, and so in truth they did. Both Wrynecker and Sir Job repeatedly asked what the vessel was likely to prove, but finding themselves unable to obtain even a civil answer, they resigned themselves to their fate, Doubtful very sagaciously observing, that he entertained very little question but that they should learn the character of the vessel as soon as she came up. The profundity of this remark entitled the maker, as we submit, to more attention than he really gained, which, truth to say, was not very great; Wrynecker and Sir Job being more engaged in random guesses as to a matter they could not possibly understand, than paying attention to Doubtful's truly ingenious hypothesis. At this time a good stiff breeze was blowing, and Brown taking advantage of it, crowded every stitch of sail to get away; putting the vessel upon a favourite point of sailing as far as the relative position of the enemy would allow. This manœuvre was however wholly in vain; on came the schooner, rapidly bringing the slow-paced merchantmen within gunshot, and then opening her fire.

"Bless my soul," said Sir Job, "this must be what they call a privateer."

"Yes, it must," said Wrynecker, "but since it is an enemy I had much rather it had been a regular man-of-war, whatever nation she had belonged to, for I hear that these privateers, having neither the gallantry nor responsibility of national colours to fight for, sometimes use their prisoners very scurvily."

"Ay indeed," said Sir Job, "I wasn't aware of that."

"Then I'll be hanged if you won't be before long, sir," unfeelingly interrupted the captain. "I'd rather be standing at the bar of the Old Bailey this very minute than have a wife and daughter of mine on board here now."

As the unfeeling Brown said this the ruddy cheeks of Sir Job grew blanched and colourless; forgetting his quarrel with the captain in his anxiety for his wife and daughter, he replied,

"Come now, you're joking; you only want to tease me a little, captain; surely whatever the necessities of war may be, no one can take a pleasure in wreaking its extremities on poor helpless women."

"God send it may be so," said Brown, in answer to this appeal, "but as to the joking, I never was more serious in my life; and all I can say is, if my wife and daughter were on board here this morning, there would be only one point I should debate in my mind."

"What is that?" eagerly demanded Doubtful, Wrynecker, and Sir Job.

The captain looked round upon the three, and then fixing his eyes upon the schooner, paused deliberately as he did so, ultimately replying,

"Why, gentlemen, the only point would be whether I should put a pistol to *their* brains or to *mine*."

"For what then do you take her?" eagerly demanded Sir Job.

"Why, as to that, gentlemen, I won't take upon me positively to answer yet, because I may be mistaken; and what's more unfortunate, we have lost sight of the sun so many days that I don't know where this gale has blown us to, any more than a child; but to my mind, I fear she's just one of those customers that we couldn't well have fallen in with a worse—if you know what that means."

"Why," said Sir Job, "you don't mean to say she's a——."

At this moment another gun from the schooner drew all eyes upon her; while the shot came skipping along the water, and crashing through the spars of the merchant-vessel, volumes of dense white smoke rolled away from the mouth of the gun, discovering a dark black mass fluttering like some enormous bird at the taffrail of the little vessel. With intense horror our friends watched this substance gradually rise, and as it mounted in the air, stream to the passing breeze, flutter forth fold after fold of its deadly field, and finally soar to the schooner's royal masthead and there remain. The evidence of this act it was impossible for any one to doubt; and with simultaneous utterance they all exclaimed,

"A *pirate!*" The consternation that now prevailed on board the merchant-vessel was indeed terrific; Sir Job for a few minutes seemed deprived of speech; the captain swore and raved like a man deprived

of his senses; while the only persons on deck who appeared to retain these in any eminent degree were Wrynecker, who screwed his brows into a look of the utmost fierceness, and Doubtful, who with a visage of intense agony and care broke out with,

"Never mind, never mind."

"You'll drive me mad with that eternal never mind of yours," said Sir Job, stamping on the deck in the first moments of grief, "what in the name of fortune are we to do now?"

"Do, sir?" said Doubtful, coming to the right conclusion in a moment; "why fight it out to the last; there are ten of us, and ten Englishmen determined to sell their lives dearly, are worth thirty in an ordinary fight; Captain Brown will lend us his best assistance, and we'll all put ourselves under his command."

"Captain Brown will have no fighting here with pirates," said the timid merchantman, showing in the wildness of his looks how completely the danger had unnerved him; "that vessel has on board her, perhaps sixty hands, men of all nations, the strongest fellows she could pick out from all the prizes she has made. What's the use, gentlemen, for you to talk of fighting such fellows as those?—what chance would these elderly gentlemen (pointing to Wrynecker and Sir Job) have with a set of cut-throats accustomed to sleep with swords in their hands, and risk their lives on them daily, when scarcely one of you knows how to hold his footing on deck, and the youngest man among you has perhaps never held a cutlass in anger in his life?"

"No, nor in play neither," said Doubtful, who remembered at this juncture his essay on horseback; "but what of that? Are we to be tamely butchered, or see our friends and nearest relatives insulted before our eyes? Surely it would be better to fall at least with swords in our hands, if we could do no more."

"And what would be the good of that, sir?" demanded the captain, "it will be a useless defence, which must irritate the pirates to greater violence than they would otherwise use, and call down on your friends perhaps those very outrages from which they would otherwise escape."

To the inexperienced ears of Sir Job and his friends, this was a powerful argument which they had not previously considered, and the captain seeing the effect it produced, followed it up by asserting that he had known many instances in which the crews of the merchant-vessels had owed all the barbarities they experienced to a ridiculous and ineffectual resistance, instead of doing at first what they were obliged to do at last, namely, surrender the cargo to their captors.

At a moment like the present, when everything like calm reason was rendered impossible by the fearful position in which our friends found themselves placed, it may readily be imagined that assertions like these, coming from the lips of a man likely to possess infinitely more experience than themselves, had very great weight with our friends in deciding their line of conduct. That resistance must, as the captain said, end in their own destruction; and the leaving those whom they loved at the mercy of their destroyers, was a fact self-evident; and ignorant of the character and habits of pirates, hope led them too easily to believe that plunder

must be their only object, and that where no resistance was offered to them, it was not improbable that they would, as the captain stated, forbear to molest those who could seemingly be objects of as little gain as harm. Whether this reasoning was really entertained by Captain Brown, or whether it was put forward to spare his own conduct, it is impossible to say; for him the result was equally unfortunate in either sense. After a consultation not long nor loud, but deep indeed, it was agreed that the advice of the captain should be followed, their flag hauled down, and no further resistance shown. Having come to this resolution, it would only have been a matter of common prudence to have carried the reasoning out to the utmost, and shortened sail; but here the weakness of the captain's policy again prevailed. When the common sense of Doubtful suggested this obvious proceeding, it was met by this argument, that perhaps some sail might appear in the horizon, some English man-of-war, and by protracting their surrender to the last minute they ran a chance of benefiting by such assistance. By this means the real fact of the case stood thus—all the results of any actual defence were thrown away, yet the benefit of this proceeding was lost by rousing the anger of the pirates, in a delay that was all but useless, it being highly improbable that in the few extra minutes thus gained any vessel would cast up to save them from capture. The consequence was, that the schooner's commander no sooner beheld the English flag fall down, than taking it as an unconditional surrender, he ceased firing, naturally expecting, as he must have done, that the merchantman's next proceeding would be to shorten sail. A lapse of a few minutes having been allowed, and no canvas being taken in on board the prize, the pirate commenced firing more heavily than ever, so that in a few minutes the merchantman's spars were entirely crippled, one of her men killed, and two of them wounded. The captain now made some excuse for going below, and deserted the helm, and Doubtful in this act beheld when too late what he was fearful might be the real key to the line of conduct which Brown had advised. With Doubtful's usual foresight of everything that might possibly happen, whether likely or not, he quietly ran down to his cabin, pocketed a brace of loaded pistols, which for form's sake rather than any other motive he had been accustomed to keep there, and seeing a short stout dirk hanging up at one end of the general cabin, he looked at it very wistfully for a few moments, and sighing deeply, knocked at Julia's cabin, saying, that the ship was unfortunately likely to be taken by an enemy's vessel, and begging her to dress without delay, he gave to her maid, who opened the door, the little implement we have mentioned; then hurrying on deck, took his station by the side of Sir Job. The schooner was now within two hundred yards,—not a sound was to be heard on board her as she came rapidly sweeping up on the weather quarter, but the dashing of the waters, which she threw off in large volumes from her graceful prow, curling up in thin transparent sheets one after another, while she swept majestically on.

It may easily be imagined how overpoweringly intense were the emotions that reigned in the bosoms of Doubtful and Sir Job as their eager eyes rested upon the dark line of heads with which the lee bul-

warks and whole of the schooner's forecastle were covered. Already you might have tossed a biscuit on board the dark low hull and yet beyond the outline of the men's forms, and the figure of an enormous sailor standing above the rest on the forecastle, holding on by the forestay yet perfectly motionless, no sign of human life could be discovered. So closely did the schooner approach her prey that the terrified crew began to utter a shout that she was going to run them down, and indeed the point of her bowsprit so nearly overhung the taffrail of the merchantman as almost to justify this apprehension. At this very moment however a brief shout was heard as if from the lips of the gigantic leader, for such he appeared to be, "Port your helm;" in obedience to the command round flew the spokes of the steerage wheel, the head of the schooner gradually fell off, and advancing at her full speed under the lee quarter of the merchantman, the weather-bow of the former just grazed the latter for a few seconds. Scarcely had it seemed to touch, when the huge seaman who had been acting as commander waved an enormous cutlass over his head, and leaped on board the merchantman followed by thirty or forty of his crew, armed to the very teeth, and exhibiting in their complexions proof of their varied birth beneath innumerable climates. Our friends who stood quietly by the taffrail now beheld themselves surrounded by these rough conquerors, while the rest of the sailors and the mate, seeing that their captain did not return, and doubtlessly imagining he had some good reason for his absence, followed his example by running down below.

"Hallo! you land lubber, where's the captain and his crew?" demanded the leader of the pirates, who was no other than Alibi.

"They're gone below," answered Sir Job, who was determined to run no risks by screening men with whose conduct he now felt intensely disgusted.

"Fetch the cowardly thieves on deck," said Alibi, turning to his people, "if it's a good hiding-place they are anxious for we'll put them up to a better one than any they'll find in this craft." A significant wink and a laugh here passed among the pirates, and several of their men going below, headed by the mate, brought up in few seconds Captain Brown and the rest of his crew.

"Who are you?" said Alibi, after giving several orders to his mates, and hailing the schooner not to stand far away. "I suppose," continued he, "that you call yourselves the passengers," for it was to Sir Job and his companions that he was now addressing his inquiries, since dressed in their ordinary costume of long-tailed coats, round hats, &c., it was impossible to believe they had any other connexion with the merchant-vessel.

"Yes, we are," frankly answered Sir Job; "and trusting that you would treat us with all the courtesy in your power, we have forborne to annoy you by any useless resistance. You're perfectly welcome to everything we possess on board, and therefore we hope you will allow us to proceed on our voyage as soon as you have satisfied the ends of your profession."

"Well, old boy, as soon as we have satisfied the ends of our

profession, as you call it, we will. Do you know what our profession is?"

"Why no, sir, I really do not," replied Sir Job, speaking as politely to the huge cut-throat as if he was addressing Her Majesty's commander-in-chief, or any other accredited hero.

"Well then, if that's the case, you just look on, old cock, and if you likes the profession as you sees it, speak the word and you shall have a taste of the bounty."

"Here's the captain and mate, sir," said Alibi's second in command.

"Fit them with their walking pumps," was the answer.

"Walking pumps for the captain and mate," cried Alibi's second, a sinister-looking rascal with one eye; "Walking pumps," re-echoed a couple of the pirate's crew. Two strong muscular Malays, on whose dark swarthy countenances no gleam of pity ever appeared to have yet shone, seizing the trembling Brown and his scarcely less agitated mate, they pinioned their arms behind them, and took their shoes off, while two or three of the pirates picked up a few of the cannon-shot intended for the merchantman's trumpery popguns, and fitted these in rude temporary slings of rope. While these preparations were being made, Alibi sat himself upon the caboose with a grin of exultation on his coarse features, and while his men ranged the seamen of the merchantman in a row before him, he thus cross-examined Captain Brown:—

"Where are you from?"

"London Pool."

"What's your cargo?"

"Cotton, slops, ironware, and tools."

"For what port?"

"Sidney, Van Diemen's Land."

"What are your passengers?"

"Four males—three gentlemen and a servant—."

"Surely that scoundrel won't name my wife and child," muttered Sir Job, who regarded this scene with the most feverish anxiety, and thus whispered his futile hopes in the ears of Doubtful and Wrynecker; but the very next moment dashed them rudely to the ground, for proceeding as slavishly in his account as if he either cared not whom it implicated, provided its subserviency saved himself, or as if the terror of his position had banished alike all kindness and all reason, Captain Brown added in the next breath,

"—Three females—two ladies and an attendant."

"What age?" demanded Alibi.

"About nineteen, three-and-twenty, and forty-five."

The brutal shouts of triumph with which this intelligence was received by the pirate's crew chilled the very marrow of the unhappy passengers who heard them. Alas! what did they not forebode!

## CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

### WALKING THE PLANK.

THAN the undisguised triumph of the pirates, nothing to our friends could have proved more maddening. Hitherto they had hoped, from the demeanour of the pirates, that the captain's prognostication, as to the good effect of surrendering, might be realised. Now all their worst fears were re-awakened, and came upon them with the greater strength from their feeling how utterly inadequate they were to help themselves.

The leader of the pirates having made a signal to his men to be quiet, proceeded with his examination.

"Who do these ladies belong to?"

"They are the wife and daughter of one of the passengers—that gentleman," pointing to Sir Job.

"Good-looking?" demanded Alibi, amidst the shouts of his men.

"The eldest one is rather queer, the other two are very good-looking indeed," answered the captain; joining the poor fool in that heartless merriment which he observed them so ready to indulge in, and in which he might have thought by sharing, to propitiate their anger.

"Very good," said Alibi. "Now, Mr. Captain, do you wish to volunteer as one of my crew?"

Mr. Captain looked undecided for a few minutes; and then judging from the jocular manner of Alibi that no mischief was intended him, made answer that "If it was quite the same to Alibi he (Captain Brown) would rather not."

"Oh, it's just the same to me," said the chief of the pirates with a grin, which, if the other had known anything of the human face divine, he would at once have recognised as boding him little good. "It's quite the same to me, captain, whether you join us or leave it alone."

"Well, then, I'd rather leave it alone, as I have a wife and child of my own; and in your line of service I mightn't be able quite so well to look after them as I can in my present one."

"Very likely not," replied Alibi; "great comfort no doubt you'll be to them! What do you say, Mr. Mate?"

"Why, sir, I say, sir, with my captain, I have a wife and child too, I prefer remaining as I am."

"Very good, Mr. Mate—affectionate beggars no doubt you both are, very! Ho there! men, walking pumps for the pair of them."

We have already said, though it was almost unnecessary, that Sir Job and his companions had watched this scene with the utmost interest, but they were wholly unable to imagine what the captain of the pirates could mean by the walking pumps. Some misgiving had also arisen in the minds of the captain and his mate touching this expression; and they did think it worth their while, as parties considerably involved, to make some inquiry touching the matter. While, however, they were

still debating and communicating with one another, by mute signs and looks, the opportunity was lost to them, since the two stout Malays seized the captain, and two other scarcely less powerful of the pirates, the mate, and before they could utter another word, they were gagged, so as to prevent all speech, and on the shoulders of each were slung a pair of those shot which had already been prepared as we have stated. Now, when it was too late they began to exclaim and make motions, as if desirous of being heard.

"Shall we ungag them, sir?" asked the pirates' chief officer when he observed these signs.

"No," replied Alibi, "I won't have them upon any terms; they are both fools and cowards; they don't know their own minds in the first place, and they can't act upon them in the next, if they did; walking is the best thing for such fellows' health. Let them step out."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied the mate in a tone of such complete unconcern as showed how accustomed he was to such exhibitions.

The sufferers in the meanwhile now for the first time perceived what was intended towards them; and though Sir Job and Wrynecker remained in the dark, it was evident to the latter, from the symptoms of agony, the desperate struggles, the imploring looks and piteous sounds of their late shipmates, that some horrible cruelty was about to be inflicted on them. Still wholly ignorant as they were on these matters, they never for an instant dreamed of the real truth, or they would have made an effort, however futile, to prevent it. As it was, they thought that some slight punishment was about to be inflicted on the captain; and perceiving that he had acted from cowardice in misleading them on the subject of their defence, this combined with other parts of his previous conduct, made them not wholly unwilling that he should slightly taste of the bitters of that cup, he had brought to their lips.

While, however, these two stood wrestling on the gangway in charge of their captors, some of the other pirates selected from among the booms a long broad plank, and projecting one end over the merchant-vessel's gangway, three or four heavy men placed their feet on the other extremity to prevent its tilting. When the proceedings had reached this pitch, the whole crew of the pirate vessel gathered round with joyous looks and sparkling eyes, and every appearance of anticipated pleasure, just as folks are accustomed to regard punch and the puppet-show; while Alibi, like some great man before whose house the wooden heroes have halted, and who therefore intends to pay for the exhibition out of his own pocket, came in advance before the rest, and taking a look round to see that the sport was not likely to be interfered with by any mal-arrangement, was pleased to signify his approbation of the same by holding up his hand.

"That'll do, my boys—fall back—fair play's a jewel—keep a ring!"

"Oh! they intend to make these two fight," said Sir Job, whose mind was considerably relieved by thinking that nothing beyond this British pastime was intended.

"Curious kind of fight," cried Wrynecker, although he could not comprehend what was going on himself, yet hardly knew how to

reconcile Sir Job's account of it, with the preparations which he saw making before him.

"I must confess I don't like the look of that plank," said Doubtful, who was intensely puzzling himself to remember the exact authority, in which he had read something relative to the use of the plank at sea. All doubt, however, was cleared upon the point, by the next order of Alibi.

"Now then, my boys, walk them forward."

"Come, march!" said the rude pirate who had charge of the unfortunate prisoners; but instead of obeying this command, both the mate and captain seemed to shrink back with the utmost horror, and make every beseeching signal to their savage persecutors that their fettered state permitted.

"Ay, I thought they would want the spur," said Alibi; "draw your cutlass." When the mate and captain heard this order, they appeared to reconsider their former line of conduct, looked at one another as much as to say, "this may be merely intended to try our courage," and advanced, though certainly in a very tender manner, to the end of the plank. Now a sudden and unexpected push forced them about two feet upon it; but instead of proceeding onward to its most undesirable point of elevation, they faced about towards Alibi, and regarding him with looks of the most agonized entreaty, were only able to utter some inarticulate sounds, in rescue of the lives so imminently perilled.

"None of your gammon, cut your sticks," exclaimed Alibi, with just such an oath and manner as a rude man would apply to a strange dog, that had intruded by accident on his premises. Still undeterred by this brutality, the others renewed their dumb show of entreaty, while the captain, in the most abject manner, threw himself on his knees upon the fatal plank, at the feet of those whose fiat appeared all-powerful.

"Up, out of that, you hound, and slip your wind, or I'll very soon make you!" was the only advantage which this humiliation gained to its maker. The latter speech being accompanied on the part of Alibi by the drawing of his cutlass, the point of which was immediately applied to the merchant captain's prostrate person.

"Didn't I bet you, he wouldn't do without the spur?" said one or two of the seamen standing by, as they remorselessly seized the trembling coward, and turned him with his face towards the end of the fatal walk. Up to this period, our friends astern had contented themselves with speaking in whispers; but at this juncture, the mate who was in advance of his superior upon the narrow path, and who saw most distinctly how hopeless was every chance of mercy, seeming to disdain the possession of the few moments that remained of life, if these were to be bought by the fruitless degradation he saw his captain undergo, came to the more rash, but more manly determination of taking his fate into his own hands. With a sudden dart up the outstretched board, the unfortunate sailor made a terrific spring from its extremity, and bounding forward into the air seven or eight feet, fell

with a heavy plunge into the sea below, and sank with the swiftness of a shot into the bosom of its unfathomed tides.

"Heaven have mercy on us!—they are making these poor men walk the plank!" cried Sir Job, who had remained standing by the wheel, doubting, and hoping, and doubting again, until the last fatal sight had prevented him from doubting any longer.

"Mr. Doubtful,—Mr. Wrynecker," continued he, "shall we stand by and see this system of cold-blooded murder pursued beneath our very eyes, and that too by British subjects, without making one single effort to rescue the unfortunate victims?"

"Never! never!" cried the parties addressed, springing forward with equal enthusiasm upon the hopeless crusade.

"Holloa! old gentlemen, where are you going?" exclaimed one of the pirates, an old English seaman, whose grey beard, hair, and moustaches curled in such profusion round his face, as almost to exclude the appearance of his features.

"Where are we going?" said Sir Job, in the most honest indignation. "Do you think we can stand by and see such a scene as this going forward, without trying to help the unfortunate beings you are murdering?"

"My eye and Betty Martin!" returned the sailor, "I see you don't understand the prudent use of your own language. There's no such a word among pirates as 'murdering;' what you see going on forward there, is only what we call jolly justice; which we practises when we gets hold on civilised society, and civilised society practises when they gets hold on us; so don't fret your heart to fiddle strings about any such nonsense as that. Besides, suppose 'twas as you say, what sort o' use now could you three gentlemen be to stop such a roaring set of boys as you see around you, when they could eat the whole bunch of you. Don't be foolish now, that cowardly son of a sea-cook at the gangway wasn't over particular in taking very great care of you, so now let him take care of himself! If you don't interfere you stand a pretty good chance; but once put our skipper's pipe out by interfering in his little amusements, and you're as good as four-hundred fathom under the salt water already; for I'll be hanged if you won't have to walk the plank after them yourselves next."

"That's nothing to do with discharging our duty!" exclaimed Sir Job, in the most outrageous spirit of integrity.

"Certainly not, certainly not," chorussed Wrynecker.

"Discharge your duty!" said the old pirate, "I like to see every man do his duty; learn to do your duty to yourselves first, and to your neighbours afterwards. You can only do yourselves harm, and that cowardly lubber at the gangway no good; therefore the first man of you that tries to pass forward to bother the skipper, will get such a crack on the pate with my cutlass, he won't know whether he is in this week or the next." As the old boy said this, he drew his sword, and made it circle round the heads of our friends in no particularly pleasant manner; while as Doubtful afterwards remarked, it looked most like a Pata-

gonian razor, so frightfully keen had its edge been made. Thus arrested, Sir Job still determined to prosecute his duty despite of any risk, looked towards Alibi to arrest his attention, *viva voce;* but his whole soul became so riveted on the sight which at that moment met his glance, that he felt himself unable to articulate a syllable. Forcibly made to advance towards his own doom by the pirates surrounding him, with jeers, shouts, blows, and laughter on every side, the captain was at length obliged from the intense pain inflicted by those who were pricking him with their naked cutlasses behind, to recede step by step, until he was fairly beyond the bulwarks of the vessel. Here he was still busy in the dumb show of seeking for mercy, when the heavy sailors who had fixed their feet upon the further end of the plank withdrew their weight, and the long beam instantly reversing its position, that part which had been inboard tilted into the air, while that portion which had been extended over the sea dipped violently downwards. Despite of all the efforts which the crew had made to deprive the unhappy captain of the power of speech, a violent scream of intense agony rose high above every other noise, as the victim felt the plank giving way beneath him. With a wild effort to fling himself upon it, and hold fast with his legs, he dashed himself forward—the body was arrested for a few seconds in its fall, and then the writhing limbs gradually slided off the inclined plane into the sea; while the shouts and cheers of the cut-throats around, all but drowned the stifled sounds of their victim. A heavy sudden plunge succeeded to the fall, and downward the wretched man shot into the abyss below.

"That's what you call dying hard, my boys!" said Alibi, turning round to the crew. "Now those blackguards are disposed of, where are now our volunteers?"

"Here they are," said the mate, pointing to a row of men, who had entered from the crew of the merchant-vessel.

"Now my lads," said Alibi, "we're easy masters on board this craft, and don't want to force your inclinations by any means; you see your captain and mate are gone, and if you don't like to enter for the schooner yonder, you are at perfect liberty to follow them."

"Thank your honour, we are just as content to leave that matter alone," said one of the men acting as spokesman for the rest; and thus in an instant, from following an honest calling, the unfortunate crew were transposed into part of as frightful a set of ruffians as the world—so prolific of such fruit, ever produced.

"Now then," said Alibi, with the air of a man who has done the state some service, "having settled with the crew, let's turn to the passengers," motioning to our friends to advance to where he stood; they had, however, conceived such an antipathy to him, from witnessing the late murders perpetrated under his eye, that between fear of the consequences of disobedience and hatred of his atrocious character, they scarcely knew how to act. Luckily for them, Alibi did not rightly interpret the causes of their hesitation, but attributing this to terror solely, advanced towards them himself. Scarcely had he opened his lips to address Sir Job, when a sudden and furious exclama-

tion of Doubtful caused him to turn round; and he there beheld the pirates' mate bearing in his arms the almost senseless form of Julia, while several of the surrounding ruffians, struck by her beauty, had already fixed on the unfortunate girl eyes of eager approbation and applause, very similar to those which the kite may be supposed to extend towards a peculiarly plump barn-door chicken. The confusion that now reigned upon deck was extreme! To the screams of Julia were added, the exclamations of Sir Job, the oaths of the crew, and the vociferous outcries of Wrynecker, all of which were however drowned in sounds, more potential than the whole of the rest combined; while, as if to increase the Babel, another sailor now appeared, bearing in his Sabine grasp, Lady Periwinkle's maid servant, a damsel nowise slow in developing the resources of her lungs, or the ticklish nature of her position.

"Where are you bearing that lady to?" demanded Alibi, in a voice of thunder, while his brow resumed the expression of far darker passions than had been found upon it, even when he was dooming the mate and captain to the barbarous deaths they died.

"To the forecastle," replied the mate, "away from her mother."

"What part of the day did I order you to do that in?" demanded the other.

"No part of the day that I know of," replied the mate, "but I thought——"

"Take her back to the cabin directly," said Alibi; but the other neither obeyed the command nor released his prey, nor seemed even inclined to do so. At first the crew did not appear inclined to take any part in the matter, and in all probability had already enjoyed one or two forcible lessons, as to the doubtful propriety of running riot against Alibi's authority.

"Take the lady down to the cabin this instant!" said the enormous skipper, thundering upon the deck with his foot, until the planks shook beneath him. Still the mate gave no signs of obeying, but as if gathering courage from his own audacity replied,—

"I don't see why that sort of difference should be made on board here, the women have been always—"

"—Take her down, sir, this instant as I order you!"—

The mate, instead of answering this fresh command, looked towards the assembled gang of pirates, saying, "Will you stand to have your rights trampled upon in this way, my men?"

Something cold here touched the cheek of the mate, while the screaming Julia still struggled in his arm, imploring her friends to rescue her from such a grasp. The mate turned round to observe what it was that he had felt: at this moment his eye came full upon the muzzle of a pistol, the eye-ball almost entirely filling up the dark round threatening vacuum. A look of sudden fear and surprise was seen upon the countenance of the mate, as he became sware of his danger; but before he could carry into effect the impulse of starting back—forth flashed the contents of the weapon; and when the sharp report and dense white smoke had passed away, the corpse of the mate was lying on the deck, the features no

longer discernible as belonging to the human race; striding over it with the still reeking pistol in one hand, while he supported Julia with the other arm, was our friend Doubtful, who had certainly shown at this important crisis, that when worked up by sufficiently high pressure, he could be as decided as any man. At first the impression of the crew seemed to have been, that Alibi had shot for his disobedience; but when it was perceived that this prompt step had been taken by one of the passengers, a sudden rush was made, by the pirates, at Doubtful.

"Back all of you," cried Alibi, stepping in most opportunely to the rescue; "the fellow deserved it," pointing to the dead mate. "If you don't want to have a little of the same salve, youngster," addressing the man who still detained Lady Periwinkle's servant, "you will bring that young woman aft here and set her down." This being done, the leader turned to Doubtful, and with a very ominous shake of the head, continued: "You'd better have kept that pistol till you were told to use it; as it is, you see, unluckily, I may have to hang you for destroying one of my crew, after striking your flag."

"Oh, very good, very good, hang away," replied Dick, with more valour than prudence, "I would have killed fifty of your men and you at the head of them, rather than have stood tamely by, and seen such indignities perpetrated upon a friend."

"And I advise you to keep that tongue of yours fast between your teeth, or you may chance to have it pulled out by the roots;" and with this gentle admonition Alibi, as if determined not to revert to the subject, ordered his men to make sail for the schooner. Then calling to him the old seaman with the grey beard, he commanded the latter to set a guard of men whom he could trust, over the hatches, to prevent any spirits being drunk, as well as over the companion, to guard against intrusion into the cabin; after which ordering Sir Job Periwinkle and the other two to go down before him with Julia and the servant, they all repaired to the saloon, which served as a general apartment to the passengers.

"Now, sir, what do you call yourself when you're at home?" said Alibi, seating himself on the table, and turning to the patriarch.

"My name is Job Periwinkle," replied the latter.

"What! *Sir* Job Periwinkle?"

"The same." Here Alibi uttered some sound which the bystanders, as far as they could catch its import, understood to be the words—"I thought as much."

"Pray, Sir Job, how came you here?" resumed the pirate, after a few minutes' musing. This at once induced a long recital of those various events with which, as the reader is already acquainted, we need not again trouble him. When the narrative was concluded, and Alibi had informed himself of the whole particulars of our friend's peregrinations, he seemed to ponder for a considerable time, and with a hypothetical tone proceeded, "Supposing, Sir Job, I were to determine for my crew that it would be more profitable to ransom you and your family, than to make you walk the plank—which of course

you will have to do, if I do not—what could you guarantee us as the price of letting you all go scot-free?"

"Why," said Sir Job, very frankly, "you may take all that belongs to us on board."

"Thank you, equally, Sir Job, but that we have got already, as a matter of course."

"Well, but how is it possible I can give you what I haven't got?"

Alibi smiled a ghastly leer at this, and then returning to the charge, made answer—

"That's true enough, but a gentleman of your respectability, you know, can always make property out of pen, ink, and paper; and for the convenience of my friends I always keep a few bills ready for signing on board the schooner; because you see there are a few such very good discounters in the Havannah, that the sight of your name at the tail of a six-months' kite, would be better for their eyesight than any lotion in the world."

"Well, sir, if this is the only way to procure the proper treatment of myself and friends, I suppose I must submit; but I hope you will be reasonable in your demands, in order that I may meet these acceptances which you require on their coming due."

"Of course," said Alibi, with as much gravity as if he had been making the most reasonable proposition in the world. "I hope you don't think I would bear hard upon a gentleman merely because I have the good fortune to make his acquaintance without, what is termed in the world, a formal introduction."

"Certainly," said Sir Job, interrupting him, "you do not stand upon form. I must at least do you that justice."

"Thank you, sir, thank you—well, suppose we say ten thousand pounds."

"What!" screamed Sir Job, with a degree of rage that made Doubtful recur most nervously to the late operation of walking the plank; though he could not at the same time help feeling for the annoyances of any mercantile man, thus suddenly obliged to surrender what was in itself a little fortune to feed the pocket of an odious cut-throat.

"Ten thousand pounds," repeated Sir Job; "why don't you ask for a half million at once?"

"And if I did," retorted the other quickly, "I dare say it would leave you a plum or two to fatten upon; so the less you say about that the better."

Sir Job began to entertain something of the same opinion himself, and therefore moderating his manner, he replied—

"You seem greatly to mistake my means, sir, and I am very sorry for it, because it may lead to maltreatment of my family as well as my friends. If my life is to go,—I suppose it's Heaven's will that you should be the instrument; but I shall submit to any tortures before I consent to take a step that may either ruin my children, who may happen to be absent from me, or beggar my creditors. Still I am willing to do anything in fairness; and if therefore you will let us go free, on my

signing bills for five thousand pounds, I'll do it; and what's more, in that case, I'll give you my word of honour they shall be paid:—much more than, under attendant circumstances, any court of justice would be likely to enforce."

"Well, well, old gentleman, perhaps your offer is a handsome one; and as I make it a rule never to stand haggling about these matters, why I say agreed. Just write down on a slip of paper what's the amount and I'll send it over to my secretary."

Sir Job accordingly made a memorandum on a piece of paper as to the sum required, and Alibi with this document left the cabin. As soon as he was fairly out of hearing, Wrynecker grasped the hand of his friend, saying—

"My generous fellow, I can't for an instant hear of your bearing this heavy loss on your own shoulders. I have neither chick nor child; you may therefore consider me responsible to you for half of it."

"Pooh, pooh," said the patriarch, "I shall do nothing of the sort: it's a mere fleabite after all; but I thought if I did not make some resistance, that fellow or his crew might discover some pretence for coming back and making a second demand."

Here further conversation was interrupted by the voice of Alibi giving to one of his men a direction which seemed of so singular a nature as instinctively to catch the ear of all three.

"What did you say I was to do with this paper, sir?" demanded one of the crew of his roguish superior.

"Why d—n it, you fool," replied the latter, "don't I tell you you're to take it on board to the old ———, and ask him if it's the hand-writing of Sir Job Periwinkle, and then bring back any paper he may send you." After this they heard Alibi giving directions to sack every part of the ship that was valuable, except the cabin, and to report to him what they found. The noise and confusion which took place consequent on the issue of this order were extreme; and after a lapse of time, that to our anxious friends appeared interminable, a boat arrived alongside the merchant-vessel, and the first word given by the party who arrived in it was "All right;" while the same voice went on to say "He wanted sadly to come on board here, but I wouldn't let him."

"The d—d thief," returned Alibi—"that was quite right; we've had enough of his treachery already."

"In the name of fortune," exclaimed Wrynecker, "who can be on board that craft that should know your hand-writing, Sir Job?"

"Why?" answered the patriarch. But before, however, the conjecture here following could be finished, the appearance of Alibi himself, silenced all further discussion. The bills were drawn out in favour of a Mr. John Browne; and Sir Job had his pen in his hand to sign them, when Alibi interposed—

"Now remember, Sir Job, it's understood between us, that you pay these bills without one word of remonstrance, or any attempt to entrap the holders at any distance of time; and if you don't happen to be living yourself, you shall take such steps as shall cause them to be equally honoured."

"I promise it faithfully," replied the patriarch, "on the express condition that I and my family are at once relieved from the presence of yourself and crew."

"Agreed on both sides," said Alibi.

Sir Job signed the bills, which Alibi gathering up and placing in a huge pocket-book as fast as they were dry, finally consigned to his pouch, and then making a profound bow said—

"Gentlemen, I wish you good morning. As for you, Sir Job, after the very virtuous principles you have laid down touching your family and creditors, it may be some consolation for the expenditure of this money to know, that you're the first person who has ever put the substantial means of reformation within reach of an erring member of society."

"Then sir," said the patriarch, "I hope you'll use the acquisition to such an end as will spare you the pain of levying any further contributions of this description."

"Why, Sir Job, unless I am very successful in the course of the present cruise, I intend with this small independence to rear up a virtuous family. Before I and my crew leave your ship, we'll take the liberty of making it what we sailors call all snug. Once more, gentlemen, I have the honour to wish you good bye; and I hope you'll have better luck next time." With this Alibi, making another profound reverence, removed the light of his countenance to the quarter-deck, to the infinite delight of the cabin party, who in a short time heard his crew quit the merchant-vessel, and row with great laughter and glee towards the spot where they supposed the schooner to be lying. For half an hour they deemed it prudent to remain quite quiet, and utterly to abstain from any appearance upon, or attempt to regain the quarter-deck, for fear the pirates might return. After the lapse of that time, however, Wrynecker agreed to go up the companion hatchway and take an observation. Finding some difficulty in opening the companion slide, he called Doubtful and Sir Job to his assistance, and the horror of the party may be imagined when they discovered themselves to be battened down. As the object of such a trick was not clearly discernible, they did not readily believe the fact; it soon, however, forced itself upon their credence, and while they were racking their brains to discover some method of egress, their attention was diverted by a curious noise beneath them as of running water, and quickly afterwards sundry plashes and dashings were heard against the deck below. To the noise of the sea rolling on the outer bend of the ship they were accustomed, and it had long since ceased to alarm them. A similar sound, however, from the middle of the deck beneath their feet, was a matter so strange, that even unaccustomed as they were to nautical matters, they could not help feeling considerable apprehension about it; while, however, they were busy pondering and surmising what this could mean, a sudden noise in the steward's sanctum, which was in the precincts of the cabin, again diverted their fears, and after a considerable riot of pots and pans, forth rushed one of the ship's boys, the very impersonation of horror and dismay, crying as if his heart would break—

"O gentlemen, we're sinking—we're sinking! Them villains has scuttled the ship."

"Scuttled? what's the meaning of scuttled?" demanded all the party so eminently interested, all of them speaking at once.

"Scuttled," blubbered the boy; "why I mean of course they have cut a hole in the ship's bottom, and the water's coming in like winking! It's floated the orlop deck already, where I got to hide away; don't you see how wet through I am. O Lord! O Lord!"

Here the boy renewed his crying with a degree of force and vigour which had any effect but that of re-assuring those who witnessed it. Lady Periwinkle and her maid, with a fellow feeling for tears, rushed forth at the sound, and generously added their sobs to the concert; while still further to distract the senses of one of the gentlemen at least of the party, they left the door of their cabin so far open as to disclose the beautiful form of Julia Periwinkle in an attitude of prayer. Amid this lamentable din, it was almost impossible to discover what was saying, what had been done, or what was proper yet to do. Sir Job having ordered the female party of the conclave to retire, proceeded to ask where the orlop might be and other questions, which speedily convinced himself and friends that Alibi had given them a specimen of "the very fiend's arch mock" in keeping the promise to the ear, and breaking it to the sense. After obtaining the bribe he desired, he had battened them down and scuttled the ship, so as to sacrifice the lives of all on board: it was it seemed rather at variance with his own interest, since some question might arise as to the payment of the bills; and then it was suggested by one of their party, that a feeling of revenge in some of Alibi's people might have led to the perpetration of the atrocity without their superior's knowledge. But whatever the origin of the cruelty, it could avail little to penetrate its malignant darkness, nor indeed were our friends in the best situation for any such exercise of the reasoning powers. The water speedily began to make its appearance on the decks of the cabin, and from the state of the ship, it was clear that at any moment she might not go down with all on board. In this horrible conjuncture not an instant was to be lost; while the first step was, if possible, to regain the open deck, even though the pirates should be within sufficient distance to observe their escape and return on board. After the whole strength of the party had been exhausted by personal attempts to force the door open, a diligent search was made throughout the cabin for some powerful implement; none however being discoverable, a fresh consultation took place; and desperate as the expedient was, from the smoke it would cause and the time it would occupy, they resolved that their only chance of escape was by burning their way out; the wardrobes of the party were quickly searched, and the laundress saved all further trouble as to the past voyage by the piling up beneath the rebellious hatchway of those various articles which would have otherwise required her renovating care—the covers of a few lockers and other small articles of wood at hand, were placed on the summit of these, and a light being applied to the whole, the fierce flame shot up with such instant fury as rendered it very doubtful whether those who had promoted it, would be able at their wish

to extinguish the fire. This at first created some alarm, but it was speedily swallowed up in the still more imminent apprehension of being suffocated; not calculating sufficiently on the volume of smoke produced, this, unable to find an exit, eddied down into the cabin and drove its occupants to the furthest extremity by its excruciating torture; the eyes formed the principal point of suffering; and when too late, they remembered how universally unbearable the vapour of burning wood was found, more especially when that wood had been previously covered with paint.

"I have heard," said Doubtful, "of people tumbling out of the frying-pan into the fire, but I never expected to have the risks of drowning on one hand with those of being burnt on the other; or the pleasures of being suffocated *in medias res*."

"It's a pleasant position, truly," said Sir Job to Wrynecker, coughing as he spoke to such a degree, that it was scarcely possible to distinguish what he advanced. "Upon my honour, I think as it has turned out, it would have been wiser to have taken the choice first offered us, and to have gone down at our leisure."

"What an infernal set of villains these pirates seem to be!" was the reply, "they must have played us this trick merely for their own private amusement; it was scarcely worth my while now I think of it to have come so far from home for their gratification."

"A man, Mr. Wrynecker," said Doubtful in reply to this speech, "is always acting a very questionable part in point of policy, when he leaves a certain good for an uncertain improvement. Good heavens, how stifling this smoke is! is there no cabin window we can break open?"

"No sir," said Sir Job, mournfully, as with his cheek upon his hand, he sat listening to the alternate prayers and sobs of Lady Periwinkle, coming forth in all the wildness of despair from her state-room. Sir Job believing that all was over, or soon would be, made a last effort to smooth the bitterness of death to those who were so nearly related to him; and for this purpose, went into Lady Periwinkle's cabin to represent to her how much better it was to possess the poor privilege of even dying thus quietly together than to have been submitted to all the tortures, maltreatment and exposure, which death at the hands of the pirates would doubtlessly have brought with it. The first words of this intended consolation were still upon the lips of Sir Job, as he entered his wife's cabin, when the sharp quick sound of a boat rowing outside the ship, struck upon his eager ear, and rendered him mute, while Doubtful exclaimed—

"Hark, Sir Job, I hear a boat pulling up alongside; don't you hear they're bumping against the ship."

"Heaven defend us, it's those villains the pirates come back!" replied Sir Job, "even in the very moment when I was congratulating myself upon their absence."

The frequency with which this coincidence does occur in life, gave it additional probability; and the cheek which had stood unmoved the danger of drowning, burning, and suffocation, suddenly blanched to the

extreme of pallor, at the prospect of once more falling into the hands of those atrocious wretches, who had already behaved so ill. Not a word was spoken in the cabin for some seconds, during which time its tenants heard the new-comers jump on deck, and exclaim in the French language—

"No wonder the ship's deserted; she's on fire as well as scuttled, we'd better make our way off as soon as possible."

"Stay," said another voice, "she appears to have been battened down. Surely there cannot be any one——"

"——Yes, there is!" suddenly interrupted Doubtful, at the top of his voice in the same language. "—There is some one on board.—There are five of us below battened down."

Owing to the confusion and roaring of the fire, which was now bursting out from the companion hatchway in long jets of flame, the exact words thus uttered were not understood by the party to whom they were addressed; but this mattered little, as it was evident that there were people below, and our friends soon heard the heavy blows of some instrument employed to break in the caboose head, while sundry exclamations, urging the party on to haste, were made during the operation. In a few seconds the passage was once more clear, Doubtful nearly smothered by the quick succession of two or three buckets of cold water—thrown on the burning fragments to quench them, and the whole party again on deck. On looking round the scene, Sir Job's first fear was that he had fallen into some kind of ambush, for there to windward of him lay a long low black three-masted schooner.

"Why, surely, that's the pirate," whispered he to his companions.

"It does, indeed, look very like it," groaned old Squaretoes. But Doubtful quickly set their minds at rest on that particular point, by giving them the result of his conversation with the party who had just come on board, from which it appeared that the schooner in question was not a pirate, but merely a pirate's first cousin, a slave-ship, namely, belonging to a French proprietor, and bound for the not far distant port of San Domingo. Being short of water and provisions, and seeing as he thought a ship dismasted by the late gales, and deserted by her crew, he had come on board to search for supplies. The thankfulness which all our party experienced at the intelligence can scarcely be conceived. Doubtful was commissioned to express their joy and gratitude, to place everything on board at the disposal of the strangers, and to say how ready they were to take a passage to San Domingo; though that was not the exact port which they were then seeking.

"As to taking what's on board," said the Frenchman, "of course I shall do that, as I have possession of the vessel; but as for taking you six people on to St. Domingo, I wonder you can expect such a thing in a slave-ship."

Doubtful imagining that the other must be joking him, replied, "It's very true, we don't any of us approve of the principles of the slave-trade, still, in an emergency like this, it can hardly be expected that we should sacrifice our lives rather than avail ourselves of safety, because the means proffered may not be exactly what we could wish."

"Hang your principles! who ever troubled himself about those? No doubt you'd be willing to go in the slave-ship, but I tell you the slave-ship won't have you; how can you expect to be taken on board a craft where from ten to twenty are daily thrown overboard, from the crowded state of the decks?"

"What!" exclaimed Doubtful, "do you mean to say you won't take us?"

"Certainly I do," replied the slave-captain; "I have told you so once already."

"What, then, are we to do?"

"What's that to me?"

"Do you mean to say you'll leave us here on board?"

"Why shouldn't I? I found you here."

"But the ship is sinking."

"I didn't scuttle her."

"Oh, this is too monstrous for belief! you can never intend to allow this lady, and her daughter, and husband, to perish by so horrible a death, when the slightest exertion on your part would restore them to life and safety!"

"As to the death, young man," said the slaver, laughing, "you'll soon cease to trouble your head about that one way or the other—we must all come to the scratch sooner or later; it's a mere question of time whether you shall go by the morning coach, and I by the afternoon, or the reverse, just as you may chance to toss up; if you hadn't a fancy for dying, you should have steered clear of blue water, more especially as we find it in the West Indies, where no man's life is worth a month's purchase at the best of times——There, stand aside, and don't interrupt me more now, that's a good fellow, for I want to get what water and provisions I can out of your hold as soon as possible; you'll be going down in less than ten or fifteen minutes, by the state of your lower deck. If there's a sealed bottle, or a letter, a will, or any little paper of that sort I can send to Europe for you, why I have no objection to do you an obliging turn, but I advise you to bear a hand about it, for you haven't much time to lose."

The cool way in which this man proceeded to wrest from the grasp of our party the saving plank which Heaven appeared to have sent them, struck Doubtful as so incredible as well as dreadful, that he stood staring at the slave-captain in a perfect trance of bewilderment, hardly knowing how he should inflict upon his own party an intelligence which in atrocity seemed, if possible, to leave behind it even the very murders of the pirates themselves.

"What has happened now, Mr. Doubtful?" said Sir Job, at once perceiving from the countenance of Dick that something very unusual had happened to disturb him.

Taking the patriarch and Wrynecker aside, Doubtful at once unfolded to them this new source of grief, and demanded what step, in their opinion, had better be taken. It was difficult to say whether their surprise or rage was the uppermost, at hearing the refusal to assist them. Wrynecker was for taking a few loaded pistols and boldly informing the slave-people that they should never quit the decks of the schooner

unless they bore with them, to a place of safety, the whole party of our friends.

"Have patience, Wrynecker," said Sir Job, "that scheme would never do; a slave-ship is always armed, and by running alongside of us we should be given to the sabres of her crew, and the ladies be left without any protection. You seem to forget that we possess a universal remedy which must come in with admirable effect; this man commands a slave-ship from a mere love of money, which his atrocity realises; to secure that money he is ready to leave us to perish on the wide sea, but if we can make it still more to his profit to save us, of course he will prefer saving us instead. After the trick those pirates have played us, I consider myself perfectly released from the word of honour I pledged them."

"Of course you are," exclaimed Wrynecker and Doubtful, in one breath.—"And therefore," pursued Sir Job, "I shall resist the payment of the bills so fraudulently extorted from me, by every means in my power; and I now propose, instead, to employ as much of the same sum as may be requisite, or even twice the amount, in purchasing a passage with the sordid villain who stands before us," pointing to the French slave-captain. This proposal having met with instant approval, Doubtful, who was appointed to carry it into effect, approached the mercenary philosopher, and with as polite a bow as if he had conceived him to be the most reasonable man in the world, thus opened the bargain:—

"When I spoke to you a few minutes since, sir, of taking a passage in your vessel, I forgot two things—first, the extreme value of space in your ship, and next, the amount of passage-money which you would be entitled to receive for any accommodation you might afford us. The gentleman whose family is here on board, is a man of some little property, and would be well content to make it worth your while to take himself and party with you."

"That is quite a different thing," said the Frenchman, shrugging up his shoulders; "what will he give?"

"Why, at a round sum," said Doubtful, "twenty thousand francs."

"It is impossible," returned the other, "I have too great a stake to lose; make it forty thousand for the whole party, and it is a bargain."

"Sir Job," said Doubtful, turning round, "he offers to take us on board for sixteen hundred pounds."

"Close with him, my boy," said Sir Job, eagerly; "tell the blood-merchant that the money shall be paid down the very day we land."

"My friend agrees to the sum you name," said Doubtful to the other, "and you shall be paid the money the day you put us ashore."

"What is the island on which you propose to land us?"

"San Domingo," said the Frenchman; "and now if your party ever wish to see it, they had better jump into the boats alongside as rapidly as they can. I don't think this craft will live above five minutes longer. Pierre," turning to one of his seamen, "hail the ship for another boat, and then hand those ladies and gentlemen into the one alongside."

Doubtful, for once in his life, was certain that he never before heard

any word that afforded him half so much delight; even the judgment of the court *in banc* grew faint beside it; and grasping Julia in his arms, he hurried her into the boat so quickly as almost to give her the benefit of a plunge-bath into the bargain. Nor were Sir Job or Lady Periwinkle more slow to follow. Wrynecker's gallantry found occupation in the assistance of the maid-servant; and thus without a particle of property or clothing, more than that in which they stood upright, our friends pushed off to the slave-ship, under charge of Pierre and another seaman, with whom the French captain had sent them on board the slaver. The joy and gratitude which they experienced on bidding adieu to that ship which had so nearly proved their coffin, found vent in something approaching a shout of joy as they passed under her counter. The slave-ship, in obedience to the hail of Pierre, had run down close to windward of the transport, and then hove-to once more,—the one being about five cables' length from the other. As our party came up, the second boat, which the slave-captain required, was on the point of leaving the vessel's side, when a sudden and vehement hail, in French, from the ship he had just quitted, attracted Doubtful's attention.

"Hark," said he, putting up his hand to arrest the noise of the men rowing, "what is your captain saying?"

The seamen paused for a few seconds, and distinctly heard the captain of the slave-ship cry out to his men, "Bear a hand with that second boat, will you. Don't you know that this vessel is sinking?"

"We're coming, sir," answered the seamen, flinging down their oars not very hastily, as they naturally concluded from his sending away the first boat that the danger was not imminent. Scarcely had the reply been uttered, when the hail was repeated:

"Bear a hand, there, with the second boat. I tell you we are going down—we are sinking—there is not a moment to spare."

"Perhaps we had better turn back," said Doubtful, kindly forgetting in this extremity of the slaver, his heartless conduct towards them.

"Here, why don't you turn back, Gregoire! Pierre, I say, help—we're foundering!"

All the French seamen in both boats put forth their whole strength now to gain the sinking vessel, which Lady Periwinkle comprehending, set up a loud shriek, imploring them not to risk her life again. She might have spared herself the trouble however, for the rapid settling of the merchant-vessel was now evident to all eyes, as plank after plank of her hull gradually dipped into the water, and the large broad streak itself began swiftly to disappear.

"There she goes by Jove!" cried Dick. "Give way my boys, or we shall be too late."

"We are too late already," answered Wrynecker. Doubtful lifted his eyes, and beheld the bowsprit of the ill-fated transport make a sudden plunge downwards,—her masts and yards fell slightly over on one side—and in another instant all were swallowed up within the vast bosom of the ocean.

## CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

### THE BEAUTIES OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

With the utmost rapidity that the rowers could command, both boats were now urged forward to the spot which the merchant-vessel had so lately occupied, in the hopes of discovering and assisting any of the survivors who might still be floating on the waves. So rapidly, however, had the catastrophe taken place, that some difficulty was at first experienced in determining which was the exact point sought. At length, however, a few floating spars seemed to indicate this, and all hands were then employed in looking for the party whom they had left on board. Anxiously, however, as they searched, it was in vain. Again and again they called the name of the captain, and then successively those who were known to have been on board with him, but nothing like an answer reached the anxious ears of the seekers. Once or twice something like the dark head of a human being seemed floating on the waves; but no sooner did the boats row up to it, than it proved to be some block or other fragment of the sunken vessel which had become detached when she went down. After a fruitless search, therefore, the passengers having been taken on board the boats, returned to the slave ship, were hoisted up, and the vessel made sail.

If our friends had been horrified at the scenes on board the merchant-ship, how were these emotions increased by the sight that now presented itself to them! Upon the small deck of a vessel of scarcely three hundred tons burden, were crowded fifty or sixty slaves, whom the close stowage of several hundred more, below, rendered it unsafe to keep beneath hatches. Chained in pairs, in every state of suffering, from those who could scarcely be called living, to others whose more robust constitution had as yet borne up against the fatigue to which they had been exposed, in a state of perfect nudity, parched and blistered by the sun, and without the least delicacy or respect to age or sex,—many of them were seen with their limbs still bleeding, where the manacle had cut into their flesh; others remained motionless, as if despair had at last brought them the only refuge remaining—Death; and not a few with the briny evidences of their anguish coursing rapidly over their dark cheeks—their large and once lustrous eyes rolling with an expression of agony and despair on every object that presented itself. There was the mother severed from her children—the husband chained apart from the wife—the living riveted to the quickly putrefying dead, while the sable hue of all these living creatures thus hideously huddled together, and agitated by all the strongest and most deplorable passions, combined with every other accompanying circumstance to present altogether such an object of horror as fairly made Sir Job start back with unconcealable terror and disgust. Hurrying his wife and child quickly towards the quarter-deck, where their senses would be spared a scene which, but for beholding, he could

not believe to exist in nature, he was at once met by the mate of the ship, who, in as infinite surprise as if the party had dropped from the clouds, demanded who they were and whence they came. To our friends, who had hoped that all these preliminaries were over, this proved anything but an agreeable query. However, having patiently endured the assertion that there was no possibility of making room for them on board, and again witnessed the talismanic powers of gold, it was agreed that the deceased captain's cabin should be given up to Lady Periwinkle and Julia; while Sir Job, Doubtful, and Wrynecker, were to be provided with hammocks, and initiated in the art of what the mate called "roughing it." We need not say how thrice happily this order was embraced by the parties alluded to, the only alloy being unfortunately a whisper addressed by the mate to one of his subordinate officers, and which if Doubtful did not hear amiss, was to the following import:

"You can easily rough it, Tom, for a few nights. It won't be long now before we get in; and if you can't manage else, you must just turn those niggers out of the starboard pen."

"And where the devil are they to go to?"

"Send them up upon deck."

"And suppose it comes on to blow, how the deuce can we manage to work the ship?"

"Then just chuck them overboard, as you did those sick devils last night," replied the unscrupulous mate. The subordinate seemed highly tickled by this resource, and went away, whether to execute his worthy directions or for what other purpose Doubtful knew not; but determined to keep a watchful eye on the proceedings of such a set of scoundrels, he forbore to impart any suspicions as to what had passed to any of his party. The night approached, and faithful to his intentions, Doubtful forebore to undress on retiring to his hammock, and for some hours struggled successfully against the weariness that oppressed him, listening most anxiously, the while, for any suspicious sound that might call for his benevolent interference. No such occasion however arose, until a sudden noise and violent shake caused him to leap with the utmost precipitation to the ground. What was his surprise to find Wrynecker standing ready dressed by his hammock, and the broad sunlight streaming down upon the quarter-deck! It was nine o'clock in the morning. There was something so perturbed in the manner of Doubtful, as he demanded of his friend what might be the hour, that Wrynecker instantly detecting the emotion demanded to know its cause; while the other, shocked at his negligence, and fearing that it might have led to the perpetration of some enormity, was glad to unburden his oppressed spirit by communicating his fears to Wrynecker; the result of which was the determination of both parties to repair on deck, and diligently to cross-examine the mate; and Doubtful was selected as the ablest hand to carry this design into effect. Dick having quickly completed his toilet, hastened with Wrynecker to the quarter-deck, and finding at the steerage-wheel the man who had received the unceremonious directions the evening before, our friend after the first two or

three preliminary courtesies of the morning, which were very gruffly received, Doubtful and his friend proceeded to take a brief walk on the quarter-deck; and the former turning short round upon the seaman, abruptly demanded,

"Didn't I hear you flinging overboard something very heavy last night?" This was taking an unfair advantage of the man, but as he was not in the witness-box, nor supported by counsel to take any objection to the illegality of the question, and as the rascal was moreover a slave-driver, Doubtful without one feeling of compunction determined not to spare the villain. In an instant our friend saw, by the startled and confused expression of the man's face, that some roguery had been perpetrated; and having recourse to that expedient, which so frequently exposes villany in a court of justice, he gave the sailor no time to recover from his panic, before he followed up his first question with the second:

"Who was it crying out in that extraordinary way?"

"Oh, sir," said the man laughing, "it was only some of them there blackies up to their nonsense."

"Nonsense! what do you mean? It was no laughing matter that I heard, I'm sure. It was a cry of the greatest agony. What was it all about?"

"Why you see, sir, this was all the long and short of it," said the mate, finding he was driven into a corner. "These here niggers die so fast of sea-sickness, we're obliged to fling the corpses over as soon as we can, to keep the ship in anything like health; and last night we had two or three to launch on their long journey, and as they left some of their relations on board, it was their friends was kicking up the shindy that you heard."

"Do you mean to swear all those men you threw overboard were dead?"

"I'm no doctor, sir, and therefore I don't mean to swear anything about it. As you ain't my commanding officer, I should like to know what right you have in poking your nose into what doesn't concern you? You landsmen never know when you're well off, or you wouldn't want telling in a slave-ship to hear, see, and say nothing; it's awkward in such a place, I can tell you, to be asking questions that don't concern you, more especially about people going overboard; you might try it some night yourself, and nobody would be much the wiser; you shore gentlemen have walked in your sleep before now."

There was something so ominous in these ruffianly threats that Wrynecker's blood crept to hear them, and drawing Doubtful away by force from any further pursuit of such investigations, he thus addressed him:

"For mercy's sake, Mr. Doubtful, don't unkennel any more of the villany on board here. It's very easy to let the blood-hounds of crime loose, but none of us can say what prey they may course down; remember who is on board here, and how entirely they depend on our prudence for immunity and protection. These men have not declared themselves pirates yet, so take care how you drive them to desperation, by even thinking that we have any of their secrets in our keeping. As to

helping these poor wretches of slaves, we are utterly powerless; and if we saw them throwing overboard the whole cargo before our eyes, our interference might lead only to our whole party sharing the same fate; it could not possibly arrest the destruction of one of the others. It is a stern necessity, but Lady Periwinkle and her daughter have claims upon us before any of those poor beings we see lying in chains, however deeply we may feel for them; and as to your lamenting your not having kept awake in the night, to rescue those whom we may well suspect of having been ill-treated, or even perhaps murdered, as far as I can see your sleepiness appears a kind intervention of Providence, that has perhaps saved the whole of us from an unsparing massacre."

Giving a deep sigh at the obvious but melancholy truths thus forced upon his attention, Doubtful agreed that silence was the most prudent course, unless something very monstrous should be perpetrated under their observation. With this promise to his friend, and an agreement not to hurt the feelings of Sir Job by any communications of their suspicion, the disconsolate pair descended to breakfast. Lured by the promised fee on restoring them to *terra firma*, the mate had certainly made every endeavour to place entirely at their disposal such cramped accommodation as the slave-ship afforded. With this view, he renounced in their favour a sort of general cabin or messing place; and here, to avoid the distressing sights on deck, the little party were assembled, discussing their expected arrival in port, when the cry of "land on the lee-bow" produced a most joyous sensation in the breasts of all, and caused the three gentlemen to rush on deck. Here, unfortunately, the fresh breeze and glorious sight were denied to the ladies of the party, by the spectacle we have endeavoured to describe.

A faint dim line on the distant horizon, was for a long while the only trace of land that could be discovered, and when at length it rose sufficiently from the deep for the seamen to recognise its form, it was declared to be that which they so anxiously sought, namely St. Domingo. Scarcely however was this question finally decided, when the look-out man at the mast head shouted forth the well-known cry,—

"Sail on the weather-bow."

At sea this incident occurs so frequently, that our friends paid no attention to the occurrence, until half-an-hour afterwards, when the land of Haiti had showed its bold distinguished mountains in the distance, and the mate of the slaver seemed to regard the strange sail with increasing anxiety, that the possibility of their being interested in the question presented itself to our friends' minds; and then it came in this guise, namely—they hoped and trusted that the ship to windward was not their old friend the pirate. All fear on this score was however soon banished, by their perceiving the rig of a square-masted vessel, seven or eight times larger than the dreaded schooner from which they had escaped; and as the stranger continued to approach under all the crowd of canvas she could display, the slave-ship began to make signals to her. Of these not the slightest notice was for some time taken; at last, however, when distant some nine miles, the look-out man at the top-mast-head of the slaver hailed the mate below, saying,—

"Strange ship is hoisting her colours!"

"What are they?" demanded the mate, with great anxiety.

"It seems a white-and-red flag," replied the seaman.—"No," then correcting himself, "a white flag with a red cross and,"—stay—"yes, a white flag with a red cross, and a union in the corner."

"A thousand curses!" muttered the Frenchman, stamping on the deck, then hailing the man at the mast-head.

"Do you mean to say it's the English white ensign?"

"Yes," replied the man, "I do, sir, and she's coming up to us very fast, as she's bringing the breeze along with her."

The joy of our friends at this intelligence was intense. Doubtful hurried down below to communicate it to and share it with the ladies in the cabin; and many and ardent were the prayers put up for the arrival of the English frigate, for such the stranger's sails seemed to denote to be her size. In the minds of the mate and crew of the slave-ship, as might naturally have been expected, feelings the very reverse of those we have described were engendered; all was bustle and excitement, rage and apprehension; and Sir Job and Wrynecker, not wishing to exasperate their captors against them, retired below. By the sounds and orders which they heard from the cabin, it was plainly indicated that the British ship was gaining on the slaver, while the heavily flapping sails of the latter proclaimed the gradual dying away of that breeze which had hitherto borne her onwards, and which indeed was their only chance of escape. In proportion as this became more evident, the anger and vexation manifested in the mate's orders increased, till at last the secret happiness of the little party in the cabin was suddenly and rudely dispelled, by a shriek so loud, so piercing, so full of horror and dismay, that while it caused Sir Job and Doubtful to spring from their feet, Lady Periwinkle fell senseless and fainting upon the arm of Wrynecker.

"What in the name of fortune is that?" cried Sir Job.

Another shriek succeeded—and then another—and another!—each if possible increasing in intensity, and each torturing the souls of those who heard it, still more cruelly than that which went before.

"Something horrible must have happened," said Doubtful, as if in answer to Sir Job. The loud thunder of a distant cannon here came booming down along the breeze.

"The frigate has begun to fire at us," said the latter, "and her shot must have struck some unhappy creature on deck." At this moment the frightful shrieks were once more repeated, and before the ear had recovered from the revolting effect, the harsh voice of the mate was heard saying—

"Overboard with them, I say; this is no time to be chicken-hearted; it's either they or us."

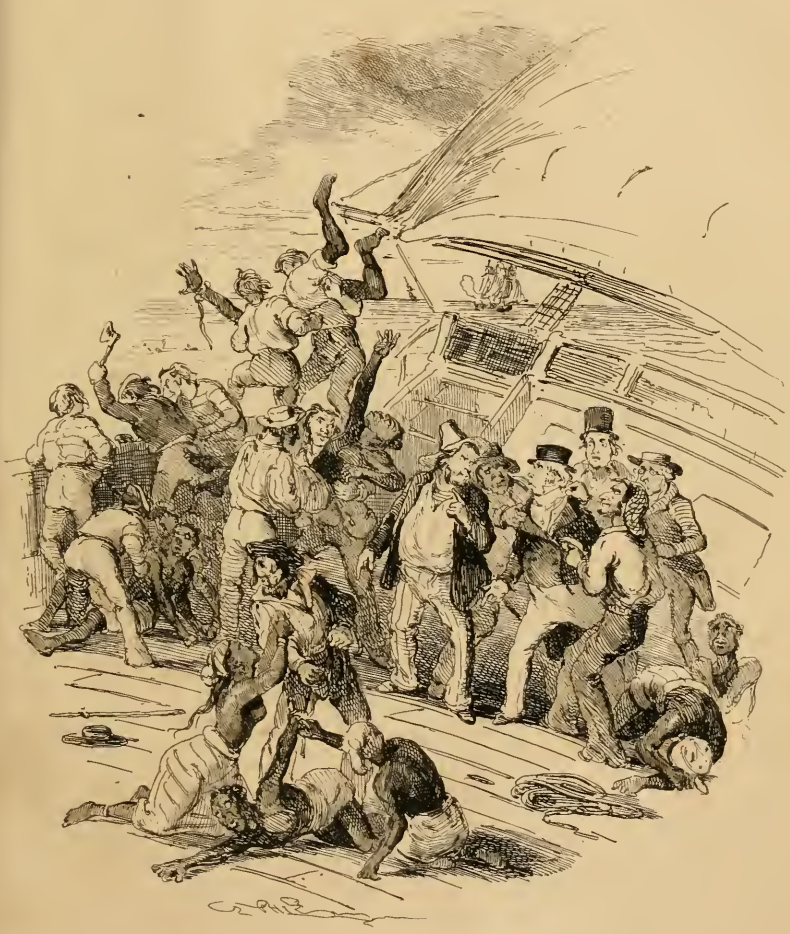
"The atrocious villains!—they are flinging the slaves overboard, to lighten the ship!" exclaimed Sir Job, starting to his feet with all the quickness of one whose motions are the effect of some electric feeling. In an instant all Wrynecker's previous arguments, as to the policy of non-interference, vanished before the genuine shock of nature; and while Julia fell back almost as senseless as her mother, the three gentlemen rushed on deck. Here they beheld the frigate at a distance of something

less than five miles, discharging her guns in quick succession at the slaver, though unfortunately without effect, as all the shot dropped short, at a very considerable distance from her hull, while gathered aft upon her taffrail were sundry demons, in the guise of men, flinging overboard those struggling wretches whom the cupidity and fear of the slavers devoted to the waves, in order to lighten their ship, and thus escape from a mitigated form of that imprisonment whose bitterest pangs they inflicted without the slightest compunction upon the unhappy wretches in their power. With an eye towards gain, even to the last, the slavers had selected for this dreadful fate all the oldest and most infirm slaves on board. Thus when Wrynecker and Sir Job arrived on deck, two strong and hardy seamen were dragging to the taffrail a female, between forty and fifty years of age, two of whose daughters were among the mass of wretched beings lying chained together in the middle of the deck, and whose agonised and lingering eyes were fixed on their unhappy parent, as she was dragged by the wretches who had hold of her to the spot of her horrible murder,—uttering at every step the most heart-rending shrieks, which were re-echoed by her agonised but more useful and more valuable children! At the very moment, moreover, that this poor creature was thus imploring to be, in her own rude dialect, which no one knew nor heeded, allowed one parting word with those her tortured breast had suckled,—she, the mother from whose loins they had sprung, was hurled from before the very eyes of our friends into the deep below.

"Loose that woman, you unheard-of fiends!" cried Sir Job, as soon as his excessive rage allowed him utterance; "loose that woman this instant! do you know that you're committing murder?" But as the whole of this speech was uttered in the speaker's native language, of which he in his passion had forgotten the ignorance of his auditory, it of course produced not the slightest effect, unless a volley of French oaths be entitled to class under this head. Doubtful, however, seeing the mistake his friend had made, addressed the atrocious villains in French, and begged them to pause while he spoke to the mate. In reply he received the startling information, that unless he and his friends went below, they would stand a very fair chance of following the negroes; since, as the breeze was failing them, the whole question of capture or escape was reduced to a matter of weight, and he, the mate, had never yet heard that there was anything in an African's blood that made it at all more heavy than an Englishman's; more especially when an English frigate was the vessel chasing.

"Do you mean to persist in this most villanous atrocity?"

"Yes," replied the Frenchman, "and what is more, if you persist in interfering, it may speedily be beyond my power to protect you. It is always the custom when slave-ships are hard pressed, to allow them to get rid of their dead weight, and if I were to attempt to jeopardise the safety of my crew by attempting to preserve these cursed niggers, it might only end in my brains being blown out, and the whole bundle of you tossed overboard; so take my advice—go below and stuff your ears with wool.—There! just as I said, there it begins!'



*The Beauties of the Slave Trade.*

Alarmed at the expression of the mate's face, Doubtful turned and beheld Sir Job struggling in the gripe of the wretches who had just thrown the poor woman overboard. Having persisted in attempting her rescue, as far as he could, the seamen had turned suddenly round on him, and in their murderous ferocity were now hurrying the patriarch towards the stern, for the purpose of hurling him after the wretched negroes, some of whom were hopelessly swimming on, in water crimsoned by the blood of their companions, on whom the sharks had already commenced their banquet. Sir Job, no way dismayed at his impending fate, seemed chiefly bent on calling his captors all the most opprobrious names in that language of which they were, perhaps luckily for him, most entirely ignorant.

"Yes, you are villains!" proceeded Sir Job; "yes, you are villains! I say, blood-thirsty, murdering, scoundrelly, cowardly villains, thrice double-distilled assassins;" and as he gave forth this strong yet impotent language, his enormous fists kept plunging into the sides and faces of the Frenchmen, with a vigour that delighted yet grieved Wrynecker to the core.

"Overboard with him!—overboard with the meddling fool!" and other similar and agreeable shouts were raised by the French seamen; when their mate interfering, at length so far appeased their anger as to rescue the patriarch from this imminent peril at the risk of his neck; he being summarily thrust down the hatchway into his cabin, together with Wrynecker and Doubtful, and the hatches once more closed upon them, leaving them in a state very similar to that in which they were first found by the slave-ship. There existed, however, this marked difference between the two positions that, although no danger of sinking now threatened their vessel, Lady Periwinkle and her daughter gave way to still stronger emotions than they had shown even before. The sight however of their friends safe and sound, though breathing vengeance and chafing their contusions, reassured the party, but still at constant intervals the distant thunder of the frigate chasing the slaver, and firing her guns every moment with more and more effect, did not tend materially to tranquillise the nerves of any of our party. As the sounds increased, and their augmenting strength foretold the approach of the English frigate, the eagerness, the mingled hope and fear, the thousand and one emotions of expected succour or dreaded imprisonment, grew so powerful, as to bid fair defiance to any description. Still, the captives in the cabin could distinguish by the hurrying to and fro, the screams, cries, oaths, and prayers, mingled in horrible confusion, the occasional sudden plunges, and then the stifled oaths that died away astern of the vessel, that the murderous work of throwing overboard the slaves still proceeded. At last Wrynecker, who could no longer bear such a state of doubt and horror, remembered that there was a small scuttle in the aftermost cabin which had been blocked up; this he determined to break open, and thus endeavour to descry how they were situated with the frigate. The poker speedily accomplished the breach, and he then beheld the object of all their hopes and wishes, the English man-of-war.

"How far is she off, Wrynecker?" demanded Sir Job and Doubtful in one breath.

"Why I should think, as near as I can guess, about two miles and a half; she certainly has come up with us very rapidly. I can see a distinct line before her bows, where she is what the seamen call 'bringing the breeze down with her.'"

"But how are we going through the water, Wrynecker?" demanded Doubtful. "Are we making much way?"

"I am sorry to say, more than we were; I should think about five or six miles an hour. Heaven have mercy on us! there goes another slave overboard, and there's another. Oh! This is too frightful for human credence. If I hadn't seen their faces rise close to me, it would seem more like a dream than a reality. What detestable wretches these slave-ship owners must be! There, one poor fellow's just gone down, while the other still swims on."

"Can't you help—can't you help them? put out your arm."

"My arm, Sir Job! I should require an arm nearly a quarter of a mile long. Ah! didn't you hear his scream?"—But before any one could answer, a sudden blow struck the stern of the slave-ship, as if it were about to be beaten in, and the whole party were in an instant covered with a shower of splinters and chips from the woodwork of the vessel; Doubtful receiving a very severe contusion on the shoulder, and all of them being thrown upon the deck.

"What next!" exclaimed Wrynecker, scrambling upon his feet; "will fate never have done whacking us! that must have been a shot from the English frigate, which on the way has taken off the head of poor blackee, for I don't see him floating any longer on the water."

"Nor I," added Doubtful; "and if that same shot hasn't given me a good crack on the shoulder, why no matter."

"Mercy!" exclaimed Sir Job in pious horror, "you're absolutely squinting through the hole that shot made; are you not afraid of another coming in and killing you on the spot?"

"No, Sir Job, just the reverse; I think this is now the safest place in the ship, because there are ten thousand chances to one that any other shot comes in exactly at the same spot." Here another heavy plunge was heard, several dark masses were seen descending over the stern, and Wrynecker with a shudder remarked,

"There go some more unhappy slaves."

"If this is to continue," said Doubtful, drawing back and shading his face with his hands, "—and there does not seem to be any probable termination to this scene of murder—let us at least avoid the torture of beholding sufferings which we cannot remedy."

"With all my heart," echoed the patriarch, leading the way back to their cabin; and as he went endeavouring to apply, unperceived, a handkerchief to those eyes which such a sight of infamy and horror had unmanned.

"When the devil gets hold of these fellows," muttered Wrynecker, "I do trust—if he has any pluck in him worth talking of—he won't forget the doings of those fellows overhead. Hillo! what's that I see?

why it's a line-of-battle-ship getting under weigh!—why there's a frigate at anchor, besides several smaller craft. Unless I am a Dutchman, these rascally slavers have made their port after all, and are safe from the English frigate." Wrynecker's lips were yet moving with the articulation of this sentence, when a sudden crash, more violent even than the first, once more threw him upon his legs. A shot had come in, a few inches from the first, and had Sir Job and Wrynecker been standing where they were, nothing could have saved them from being killed upon the spot. After passing through the stern-timbers, the iron ball, which had *ricoché'd* upon the water and was very nearly spent, had struck up through the planking of the deck, and there, by the shrieking which seemed to follow its arrival, had in all probability done considerable execution. While Wrynecker arose from his position, one moment blessing his stars that he and his friends had had so lucky an escape, and then in the next instant giving utterance to sundry expressions about the shot's eyes which are generally acknowledged to be much more pithy than correct, the hatchway of the cabin was rapidly unbarred, and three or four seamen appeared, bearing in their arms the body of the mate.

A timely wave of the hand from Doubtful had enabled Lady Periwinkle and her daughter to obtain refuge in their sanctum, before their eyes were distressed by this addition to all their previous horrors. The seamen, as they laid their dying comrade on the mess-table, looked with no friendly eye at the English party, and uttering numberless maledictions on the country to which the chasing frigate belonged, repaired on deck for the purpose, as it appeared by their own conversation, of seeking for a surgeon from one of the neighbouring ships. Great as was the horror which Sir Job entertained of the slaver and all that belonged to her, an involuntary impulse induced him to ask the mate if he could be of any service.

The wretched seaman, however, had been wounded in the spine, and was already speechless. Doubtful therefore asked the one who seemed the next in command, "whether they might go on deck," and in reply was most politely informed, that he might if he pleased go to a place which many suppose to be considerably warmer than the warmest point of the East Indies. Comforted by this assurance, our friends ascended, and found themselves at anchor in a most capacious harbour, with several men-of-war lying round them; while in the offing towards the sea they beheld the English frigate, standing swiftly away to get clear of the land; while the seventy-four, they had beheld unmooring, was following tothe best of her ability; like a huge cow endeavouring to overtake an antelope. Mindful of the unfortunate companions of their voyage, they looked down to the hold, which, but a few hours since, had been crowded to suffocation with their fellow-creatures, while the surplus were obliged to be received on deck. Now they beheld, huddled together, scarcely twenty miserable wretches out of three hundred. This sad fragment being, unfortunately for themselves, the youngest and finest among the whole cargo, kidnapped from those homes to which they were bound by all the tenderest ties—where

they were pursuing innocent and industrious occupations, and from which they were torn by the most sordid wretches for the worst of purposes, by the least pardonable means. When Sir Job and his companions beheld this tacit proof of the wholesale murder which had been carried on while they were below, horror and surprise kept them silent. Walking aft to consult together without risk of being overheard, they met a young lad whom they had not before noticed. There was on his countenance an ingenuous smile of youthful carelessness, which convinced them that he stood unstained by the atrocity of his shipmates.

"What harbour do you call this, my boy?" inquired Doubtful.

"St. Domingo," was the quick reply.

"Then in St. Domingo, since Fate so wills it," said Sir Job, "will we for the present set up the staff of our rest, and as soon as we can get out to sea again upon our original destination, why we will; till such time as that happens, let us warm our toes, and make ourselves as resigned as Heaven permits to us."

This sentiment met with the entire approbation of all hearers; and while Sir Job took steps to carry it into execution, let us for a brief space refer to the dilemma in which we left our heroine Nora Creina.

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## CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

### COLONIAL GOVERNMENT.

On the moment that Eveline and the rest of Nora's friends received information of the dire strait to which our heroine was reduced, they set off, as we have already stated, to the governor of the Fort. Having stated the object of their visit, they were told with many bows and much Gallic politeness that they should be attended to immediately, and were shown into a room, where they found waiting one or two other individuals, whom they concluded to be all equally desirous of an interview with the high authorities whose interposition they themselves desired. They could not help remarking, however, that while they sat disconsolately waiting, the others in the same room moved off one after another with a degree of briskness which seemed most enviable. This however was but natural: they had arrived before our friends, and of course had a right to pre-audience. When however the last of those whom they had found waiting had gone before them, our party naturally thought that their turn for preferment had arrived. Considerably to their disgust, however, they perceived the person who acted as official walk up to a dirty little scrubby animal, who had come in a good half-hour after themselves; and giving him a most provoking preference, after a brief species of whisper, which seemed to infer matter of high moment, the lucky individual was led off into those sacred penetralia, which appeared equally remarkable for the double fact of no one returning from its gloomy ways when once entered, and they

themselves being utterly unable to enter it at all. They conceived that something very peculiar had given to the favoured one the selection he had gained, and therefore they waited patiently for the next opening of the door, when they were quite certain their own turn must arrive. After a few minutes the portal once more yawned, and all three of our friends rose in a hurry, to anticipate the trouble of the master of the ceremonies, such as he was, in bidding them rise and follow. Any such idea, however, seemed very far from that worthy person's contemplation, since they beheld him walk straight to a second personage, and lead him off in like manner to the former. To this disappointment also our friends found philosophy enough to resign themselves, still confident that some very efficient reason must exist for this preference; nor was it until they discovered they had been thus four times victimized that they ventured upon an open remonstrance. On taking this decided step, all their fears were at once assuaged by being informed, that the other gentleman came by appointment.

"What," said De Passoa, "are they all here by appointment then?"

"All except that gentleman," said the official, pointing to some unhappy wight, "of whom," he added, "you shall certainly have precedence." Three or four hours passed, and still the appointed people continued pouring in and towering to the object of their wishes over the heads of our friends, who still received the same satisfactory answer to their application; until it began to strike Eveline very forcibly, that while they waited to get the ear of the governor, the party for whom they were interested might be borne beyond the reach of assistance. Again and again they urged this circumstance upon the attention of the very polite gentleman who had charge of the department where they then were; and still they received the same reply, of the excessive sorrow felt by the utterer, that being unable to depart from the official duties, &c. &c. At last, after four hours and a half's waiting, they found themselves left alone with the solitary gentleman, before whom they had received the kind assurance that they really should enjoy that kind priority to which they were entitled. Now there they were, on the threshold of attaining the first point of their desires, and a few moments would doubtless suffice with the upright governor to procure that exertion of his authority which was so necessary for them, and to which they had so strong a claim upon every showing. It certainly was rather unfortunate that the business of the last applicant appeared so urgent; what possibly could detain him so long? it was absolutely nearly an hour since his exit; and they heard no footstep nor any sign of being sent for, nor any one stirring within those mysterious passages, that led to the terrestrial little deity, in whose worship they had seen so much anxiety shown.

"Is the governor always at this here fun of doing justice and seeing these here folks?" demanded the sea-captain, whose rude stock of patience, never very extensive, was beginning to be rapidly exhausted by these delays of office, of which till now he had enjoyed but a very slight experience. De Passoa shrugged his shoulders at the question, as if scarcely comprehending to what it tended. The captain, how-

ever, speedily made that clear by adding, "If the governor gives this sort o' audience every day, he can have time to do very little else by the hours we've been here; if we don't look sharp and see him, ten to one but he'll have cut off."

"I have had some fears myself on that head," said Eveline, "but what are we to do?" At this moment the door opened; not the magic door through which the privileged suitors passed to their desires; but that less-guarded one through which they came to show how those desires agitated them. The party entering was an old man, (he had been of the preferred suitors,) who after looking about the room for some seconds as if unable to find what he sought, turned round to our party; and Eveline with her natural quickness guessing at his position, said in French—

"You're looking for your hat, are you not?"

"I am," replied the other; "but I'm afraid I've lost it."

"Oh! no, you've not," said Eveline. "I saw you put it very safely in a corner when you came in; and it struck me as you did so that you might very probably forget it, from the very care which you bestowed on its safety." Going up to that part of the room where the old man had been originally sitting, Eveline pushed aside a small *fauteuil*, and underneath it was discovered the missing golgotha. The old man returned this civility with a world of bows and thanks; and either from the handsome countenance of Eveline or his own natural urbanity, he certainly seemed to set more store upon the act of attention rendered him, than it could have possessed any right to claim from its intrinsic value.

"May I ask, sir," said the old gentleman, hesitating diffidently for a moment. "May I ask how it is you are still waiting here?"

"Certainly," replied Eveline; "we are waiting for our turn to see the governor."

"Your turn!" said the other; "why I found you here before myself."

"Yes, but you had an appointment."

"Not the least on earth," said the stranger.

"No!" said the others, starting back in the greatest surprise.

"No certainly, I assure you not," said the other: "indeed, so far from an appointment, it was only half an hour before I came, that I had the least notion I should have any occasion to trouble the jackanapes who dwell in this concentration of all *charlatanerie*."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed the others, all crowding round the stranger at this intelligence.

"What can be the meaning of our being so trifled with?" demanded Eveline.

"Ay, I should like to know myself," said the other party over whom our friends were to have had the preference.

"What can be the reason of the officers treating these gentlemen thus? What is the business, gentlemen, you have come upon?"

"That has nothing earthly to do with the question," said the old gentleman; "how much did you pay, may I ask?"

"Pay?" repeated Eveline.

"Pay!" repeated the sea-captain.

"Of course, pay," quietly continued the old man.

"Pay for what?"

"Pay for the interview you are desirous of getting."

"To the servants here?"

"To the servants here."

"At the governor's house?"

"Yes, here at the governor's house; why do you make such a secret of it? I won't tell. How much did you pay for the interview you wished to gain?"

"Why, of course nothing!" exclaimed the whole party in one breath; "we never dreamed of such a thing!—or that it would be permitted."

"Then you may learn from me, gentlemen, who possess a little more information on the matter than seems to have fallen to your share, that nothing is here permitted without it; pay well, and you may get all you want. I have the honour to wish you a very good morning." With this broad hint the little gentleman popped on the recovered hat, and smiling knowingly on our disconsolate friends, tripped gaily away. Nothing could exceed the consternation this produced upon those expectants who had been thus wasting their hours in vain imaginings after justice, &c. Money was a commodity in which, from the peculiarity of their circumstances, none of them were very redundant. Mustering all they could on so short a notice, and being able to spare only the small sum of three pounds, Eveline was rather afraid that this would be of no avail, till being reassured by De Passoa that it was a very respectable bribe for a Frenchman, one in short which was recognised as being well worthy the acceptance of a member of the grand nation, he, as a fellow countrymen, was deputed to undertake its offering; this he accordingly did; and having managed to summon the attendant, De Passoa made a slight jingle in his waistcoat pocket, as if about to produce it, and then asked in an assured manner if their turn had not arrived for audience.

"What is it you say, sir?" demanded the faultlessly-tutored servant, who was not going to commit himself to any positive answer before he had received that full reward which he sought. De Passoa saw this too, and pulling out the coin from its retreat, he slipped it into the hand of the official, and repeated his question.

"I say is our time for audience not yet come?"

"Oh! I beg your pardon, sir," with the most ready impudence. "I was just coming to conduct you onwards, when you rang the bell."

In the innocence of her heart, Eveline felt for a few seconds some regret that they had been so precipitate in listening to the suggestion of the elderly gentleman with the hat, since the money, which she now conceived had been needlessly paid, would have been extremely useful for many other necessities that were rapidly growing up around them. Her sorrow was, however, instantly removed on their gaining the second room, through which their present guide led them, and from which they actually caught retreating, in evident haste and perturbation, the identical little gentleman whose friendly communication had imparted

to them that spirit of bribery which, as he said, had such perfect dominion throughout the governor's palace; certainly they could no longer doubt the information was correct; for there upon a peg, most quietly reposed—perfectly at home—the very hat, to recover which, in such seeming perturbation, the little gentleman had originally introduced himself to their notice. The whole truth now flashed with painful conviction upon the mind of Eveline. The civil little gentleman, it was quite clear, was nothing more than a fellow-confederate of their conductor, part of whose business it was to bring up to the requisite point those defaulters, to whose slow apprehension this monetary system was not sufficiently apparent. Greatly enraged at the trick which had been played upon them, she followed through room after room, fully resolved in her own mind to expose the whole system to the governor, that upright and all-avenging officer who was to set free Nora, punish his venal defendants, and enact, in reality, the mimic equity of the Baratarian prince and philosopher—Sancho Panza. In the midst of these calculations, however, they were checked by their conductor entering an apartment where a gentleman was engaged in writing. Making a most polite bow, their guide informed them that here his department ended, and he must therefore wish them good morning.

"But stay," said Eveline, "have you informed this gentleman what we want?—or is this the governor?" whispering the latter in a low key.

"Oh! no, it is not the governor," said the guide, in a tone which showed his great indifference whether the person of whom he spoke heard the conversation or not, "it is not the governor, it is only the under-secretary's secretary's second clerk, and as to my explaining to him your business, it is not the *etiquette* for any one to do so but yourselves."

Determined to have no more nonsense or shilly-shallying of false delicacy, Eveline took the liberty of asking, in the same loud voice that the other had used, whether the second gentleman must be paid also.

"Really, sir, you can't expect me to make an answer to such a question," was the reply; and in another instant the party speaking left the room.

Growing desperate from the increasing difficulties that thus sprung up in their path at every step, Eveline boldly marched up to the writing gentleman.

"Sir, we are here to see the governor; pray may I ask what is your fee?"

Something like a smile at this open-handed mode of proceeding seemed involuntarily to gather round the lips of the second clerk as he replied—

"Anything above forty francs."

"What, then," said Eveline, returning to the charge, "are you in your price less than the man who is just gone out?"

"I have nothing whatever to do with him," said the other sulkily.

"I am sorry for that," returned Eveline; "but we have just given him seventy-five francs for leaving us here in the lurch."

"The devil you have!" quickly returned the man who had nothing to do with it. "This is too bad; he shall disgorge half of that to this department."

"Don't do that," said Eveline, who saw the danger of making any enemy in such a place, "we will make it up to you ourselves;" and once more mustering their funds to the best of their abilities, they were advanced three higher rooms, until they met with a vulture of higher rank. Here their second guide halted, telling them that this person's fee was twenty-five francs higher than his own. On this De Passoa and the other implored his protection, saying they were unable to raise such a sum between them then, at all; but that if they were allowed the interview they desired, they would faithfully return and render up the fees demanded at their hands. On this the party appealed to made a representation to the one most interested; and the latter, to the horror of all the suitors present, made answer:—

"As to seeing the governor to-day, that's impossible, for he's been gone out these two hours."

The fury and the rage of Eveline and her party on finding how they had been cheated and cajoled, was great beyond expression. So full of fury did they feel, they could hardly bestow the slightest attention on the request made by the presiding demon of the place, that they would return at an early hour on the following morning, when he, the said first clerk, would see about granting their request. Turning on their heels without making any answer one way or another, our friends hastily quitted the governor's palace in a state of excitement and disgust which no words could utter. They had not proceeded far from the door of this imposing den of iniquity, and were yet consulting on the steps which it would be most advisable for them to pursue, when a lad came running past them, not as if his attention was to address themselves; but as he ran by, he slipped a scrap of paper into Eveline's hand, and then darting down some neighbouring street, was out of sight in a few seconds. Eveline, naturally anxious to know what this proceeding could mean, eagerly opened the paper, and read these lines:—

"The object of your visit to the governor is known. Orders for the arrest of all of you are written out, and only waiting the return of the governor to be signed and executed. Tear this and fly." With the rapid speed of a mind accustomed to receive affliction's heavy blows when there was the least appearance of their falling, Eveline read three or four times over the note which we have mentioned, almost doubting, either that her eyes misled her senses, or that some of her party had contrived this for a hoax. With equal swiftness she found, however, that the alarm given was nothing more than the sober truth, when, quietly handing the slip of paper to her companions, she beheld the immediate alarm which its contents produced. Hurrying forward till they gained the obscurity of some unfrequented street, a hasty consultation was held as to the course to be pursued. Eveline, with characteristic boldness, proposed, that as they were unable to procure the interference of the authorities

with the captain of the French man-of-war for the restitution of Nora, the next most advisable step would be to take boat, and return to the ship themselves, trusting to their presence or persuasion to produce the effect they desired. Here, however, the startling difficulty presented itself. It was quite evident that the captain's influence with the governor had produced the arrest; and if they should venture themselves on board his ship, in the hopes of rescuing Nora, might not such a step simply end in the detention of all, without their being allowed to see her whom they sought? It was quite evident that the tyranny which could plot and arrest those who were rather entitled to protection and confidence, was quite equal to any further breach of fair-dealing, by waylaying all who were likely to be troublesome. On the other hand, they found themselves open to this dilemma: if they remained on shore,—how could they escape from imprisonment? Or even if escaping, by what species of undiscovered power could they compel a man armed with resistless authority like the French captain to send without the reach of his guns those whom he desired to retain? The more they examined into their present position, the more hopeless did it appear; and while they were yet debating in the full conflict of their various fears, wishes, and opinions, Eveline was nearly thrown down by the quick passage of some enormous negro as he ran past the spot which witnessed this agitating council of war.

"Ah, the very thing! It shall be Jupiter Ammon!" exclaimed De Passoa, attempting to catch the arm of the negro, who however only quickened his pace the more for the interruption.

"Jupiter! I say, Jupiter Ammon!" cried several of the party. But Jupiter, who could not possibly have missed hearing these calls on his attention, only walked the faster, as if to avoid them. Eveline, however, speedily recovering from the rude shock she had received, saw in an instant, of what marked service the negro could prove in such an extremity; and darting forward and catching his arm, so as to compel him to look back, he no sooner recognised the forms of those who were appealing to him, than with every manifestation of pleasure at the meeting, he at once halted, and turning round, retraced his steps to where the consultation was now held.

"Where are you hurrying so fast, Jupiter?" demanded Eveline.

"Ah, sir, me get into one terrible scrape by talking to you dis marning—him massa, him discober ebery ting, him promise Jupiter Ammon floggee, floggee, so Jupiter him run away to join Toussaint l'Ouverture."

"How far must you go to join Toussaint?" demanded the others.

"Only a few miles, massa. Toussaint him bery near. Him come into de city to settle de dam whites. Jupiter care for white massa no more."

"Neither is we; so, Morbleu! we shall go with him," cried De Passoa.

The Rebels' Camp.

## CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

### THE DANGER THICKENS.

The first few rapid questions of our friends soon elicited from Jupiter that the governor was about to fly for safety on board the seventy-four, and that all who remained in the city were in danger of being massacred. On hearing this intelligence, a fresh consultation was held, at which it was unanimously resolved to embark in the same boat with Jupiter, and by throwing themselves on the protection of the powerful Toussaint, endeavour to enlist him in the recovery of Nora from on board the seventy-four. The next question was, whether they were sufficiently disguised to pass through the town unnoticed, and so get a fair start to the negro camp. In order to effect this securely, Jupiter advised them all to come with him to the house of a friend, where he would disguise them as people of colour; and thus the out-posts of Toussaint's force would be less likely to arrest any strange inquirer for the General; while the authorities of the town would feel sadly puzzled how or in what way to account for the sudden disappearance of those victims, for whom the resistless and relentless noose of power had been prepared. If anything like force could succeed in gaining back Nora, it must be a force put forward in the manner named; for it was quite clear, that it must otherwise be impossible to strive against the coalition, which it is evident the French captain had, and still was prepared to execute. Since they had come to this resolution, it was utterly impossible that they could have selected a more sure and unerring guide than the assistant they had chosen. On the other hand, Jupiter capered and danced around them for a few brief seconds, with as much delight as if they stood triumphant over all the white possessors of the island. Much had, however, to be accomplished before this victory was awarded to them. In the mean time, Jupiter conducted them to the house of a friend, who lent the readiest assistance in colouring their skin, and clothing them in dresses suited to the change. Thus equipped, they lost not a moment in stealing through the most unfrequented part of the town, until they arrived at the house of another of Jupiter's friends. This man was, it seems, in the confidence of the insurgent party, and indeed a kind of spy kept within the enemy's camp, for the purpose of forwarding the views of the insurgents. Here, as the sun was now in its full heat, our friends were shown into a large and cool apartment, where they were enabled to enjoy two hours in refreshing sleep, so necessary in that climate. About four o'clock in the afternoon, they were led to the outskirts of the town, and being previously mounted on some mules of superb breed, they pushed rapidly forward towards the insurgent camp, which they reached at midnight, without any misadventure worth recording. They found the insurgent forces encamped, in and around a small hamlet or village, situated in the gorge of a deep valley. The houses, such as they were, were principally occupied by the highest officers and imme-

diate staff of Toussaint, while the men slept in any sheds or outhouses available to their necessities; and the great majority of the army, for so they termed themselves, were obliged to bivouack under very rude apologies for canvas tents. It was to one of these that our party was conducted in the still hour of a beautiful tropic midnight, with the moon nearly at its full, and shining directly down upon them with a strength and purity denied to colder and more healthy regions. Word had been brought from the self-styled General Toussaint, that he would see this accession to his standard to-morrow morning at daybreak; and while our party paused at the door of their new retreat, to gaze on the beauteous scene before them in the full enjoyment of a hardly-purchased security, Jupiter, who had already tethered up the mules and given them a supply of forage, now bustled into the allotted tent of his party, and laid out for a hasty meal the few cups and other utensils which he had hastily borrowed for the purpose of furnishing his companions with a supper, composed of real West Indian cocoa, some plantains, dried fish, bread, &c. Worn and tired to death, Eveline stood at the door of the tent, leaning upon the arm of the kind-hearted De Passoa, gazing down upon the picturesque assemblage of village-huts and canvas roofs. Here were, at the time of which we write, encamped something not far short of thirty thousand negroes, all of them gathered from different estates in the island—all of them slaves, but a brief space since—and all of them sworn to wear the galling chain of servitude no longer, or perish in the attempt to unrivet it from their necks. Never on any occasion could words more fitly apply to men and circumstances for whom they were not written, than did the forcible lines in Lara correspond with the position in which Eveline's new allies were placed:—

> "That morning had been freed the serf-bound slaves,
> Who digg'd no lands for tyrants, but their graves."

It may easily be conceived, that, at such a juncture, the camp of the rebels presented all the elements of confusion in no ordinary degree. Many thousands of the creatures there assembled were in a state so near to savage wildness, that only a step of the slightest extent divided them; and not a step above, but one beneath the rude advantages of untutored nature made the difference. Every species of extravagant expectation had obtained ground amongst them. Most of the vast assemblage, hitherto steeped in misery to the very lips, now imagined that they were suddenly to be made kings at least; others, who had passed years of their lives in undergoing a system of the most brutal tyranny, whose nights and days had crept away from them in dungeons, whose backs had been subjected to the torture of the lash, who had witnessed their wives and daughters helplessly given up to the same system of outrage—these, all thirsting for revenge, now found approaching the hour that should bring fruition to their unsparing hopes of revenge. Others, who had endured less, dwelt with delight on the speedy prospect of plunder and unrestrained licentiousness; while all were strung to the last pitch of excitement, by knowing they were on the eve of deeds that must either give them death or liberty, and that consciousness that the

expected struggle of many years must now all depend upon their strenuous exertion. Agitated by these various causes, the whole army had divided itself into knots and parties; and, enjoying themselves in the refreshing coolness of evening, eagerly debated the expected issue of the morrow, or interchanged their wishes, hopes, and fears. The hum of the vast multitude rose up to Heaven like the low and deep murmur of the distant sea, which from the highest spot, where our friends were standing, was just visible, as it closed the prospect of the picture, and reflected the bright moonlight in a stream of vivid brilliancy, or like the far-off and flaming sword that guarded the gates of Paradise.

After gazing on this novel spectacle for some time, Jupiter came running to our friends, to say that supper was waiting. After the long journey they had sustained, sometimes on foot, and for the greater part on the backs of mules, as tired and exhausted as themselves, it needed no second summons to make the whole party rapidly avail themselves of the agreeable invitation. Rude as their fare was, few of them remembered in their happiest hours a meeting more agreeably appreciated than the present; while, to crown their satisfaction, an officer from Toussaint L'Ouverture, calling himself colonel and aide-de-camp, presently entered, with a message from the general, to say that that distinguished functionary would honour them with an audience at sunrise on the ensuing morning. Eveline, who had a keen sense of the ludicrous, could scarcely help laughing as she contrasted the pompous manner of the colonel and aide-de-camp with that worthy officer's appearance. That the reader may form some idea of the matter, we will describe it. The aide-de-camp was a fine, tall man, of some six feet in stature, well made in proportion, with as much thick-lip and flat-nose as might have answered for a whole tribe of North Americans. Shirt he boasted none, for the last he had the good fortune to possess he had worn nine weeks, and the sole remaining tail had parted company with the gallant colonel that morning. By dint of coaxing, however, he had persuaded the wristband of the left sleeve to stay a little behind its body; and there it certainly did remain tied round the flesh with some fibres of strong grass, but rather unfortunately sticking out a full inch beyond the coat which should have covered it, and thus leaving an *hiatus* between its own ragged rim, where the sleeve had been gradually torn off from it, and the cuff of the coat—the black skin, of course, appearing beneath. Some people may think that it would have been better to have dispensed with this fragment of happier hours, but they are wrong: this clearly showed that he once had a shirt. The fact had as great a moral influence upon his regiment in its way as the Earl of Cardigan's black-bottle story must doubtless have had on his. The coat of the colonel was in its style of the same unique description: it had once belonged to a private French soldier—some century and a half before by the frightful wear that every part of it displayed, while, in strange keeping with its leaden buttons, a pair of English naval epaulettes, frayed down to the very yellow silk padding, and that of course dirty in the extreme, ornamented the shoulders. A pair of drab knee-breeches came below the coat, patched and spotted with grease,

and worn without any braces, to compensate for the want of which, appeared round the waist a midshipman's old belt and dirk. On his head he wore a footman's hat, with a black cockade, which he seemed to consider much enhanced by a tarnished gold band round its base, while, his legs being as bare as his mother originally produced them, he wore on his feet a pair of half-boots, not a little the worse for exercise. The pomp and vanity of his manner made up for all other deficiency; and for fear of there being any doubt of his rank and consequence, he was followed at a respectful distance by two orderlies, *alias* a couple of negroes, bearing wretched firelocks, and having no particle of covering upon them beyond a rude sort of cloth wrapped round the middle. It is true that as this "officer of rank" walked into the tent where our friends were at supper, and had an opportunity of comparing their better appointed habiliments with his own, there seemed to be some little abatement in his great assurance; and certainly, had he been acquainted with the real sex of Eveline, this would not have tended to set him more at his ease. After a few minutes' conversation as to his message, and the hopes and resources of the insurgents, this specimen of the independent army of Hayti left them to their repose, which was not more prized than necessary. Jupiter, who acted as their commissary, had procured several native hammocks worked in grass; and these being suspended in the best manner practicable across the tent, by various poles stuck in the ground, our exhausted friends scarcely perceived the want of any clothes, but jumping into them with every possible alacrity, were soon securely sleeping. To Eveline's mind scarcely an hour seemed to have passed, when the strong hand of Jupiter, laid upon her hammock, called upon her to arise and hasten to the interview with the negro chief. With much reluctance, and some strong remarks on the part of Simpson as to Toussaint's propriety in holding such an unreasonable levee, they arose, underwent various apologies for the toilet, and followed their guide into the presence of L'Ouverture. If the appearance of the aide-de-camp had been absurd and trying to the gravity of the beholder, the scene that now presented itself banished into forgetfulness all previous incongruities. Nature alone, by her majestic aid, prevented the whole scene from becoming ridiculous; and, in the bright beams of the morning sun, gave to the motley group now gathered, the only redeeming appearance it possessed, that of rude power. Toussaint, who appeared to be on the borders of fifty years, stood on a rising ground, backed by a screen of palm-trees, prickly pear, and cane brake, beyond which towered mountain upon mountain. Before him lay stretched a succession of fertile valleys girt in by the fair blue outline of the sea. At some distance from his potent person were ranged in a semicircle something like a hundred negroes, who called themselves the *élite* of his officers, and body staff. Every variety of costume seemed to be in high favour among these warriors, except the military. Some were decked out with pieces of bed-hangings; others wore scarfs from some gaudy French silk counterpane; numbers upheld the propriety of dressing themselves in window-curtains, worsted lace, furniture covers, and, in short, everything that seemed likely to attract the eye,

from feathers downwards. L'Ouverture himself appeared in some degree aware of the laughable nature of this clothing, and to be in his own person an exception to its general use. He was a man tall in stature, strong in mould, and possessing a remarkable smile about the mouth, which was utterly at variance with a certain lurking devil in the eye that seemed to caution you how you trusted him too far. He wore nothing but an undress uniform blue coat, with brass buttons down the front; some of which announced him to be of the 50th regiment, others of the 90th, 22nd, 43d; but this discrepancy in their evidence afflicted him but little. On his head he wore a sadly-battered cocked hat; and by his side hung an enormous cavalry sabre. As Eveline approached the knoll of ground on which he stood, she started back with apprehension, since among the motley group around the negro, she either saw, or fancied that she saw, some hated face she knew. Pausing for an instant to look again, and assure herself of the fact, her eye wandered in vain over the large circle of swarthy countenances; and trusting that she had been deceived, she recovered sufficient possession of herself and manner to walk on. The reception which Toussaint gave to De Passoa, who, speaking the same language, was put forward as interpreter, was kind in the extreme.

"I am delighted," said the astute chief, "at having any opportunity of rendering a service to one of your nation, for the English only have any proper respect for true liberty."

De Passoa, who here perceived that his nationality had been mistaken, prudently forbore from correcting the chief upon the point, since no one knew better than himself the bitter animosity which all the negroes felt against the soil and natives of France, and which led to the passing of the memorable Haytian law, that no Frenchman should ever be able to hold property in the island. De Passoa was yet smiling within himself, when he observed some amiable one-eyed youth whisper a few words in Toussaint's ear.

"How is this?" immediately replied the other, the smile rapidly vanishing from his lips, while his large dark eyes grew round with rage. "Is it true that you are a Frenchman? How dare you take to yourself compliments that were never intended?"

"You mistake," said the well-bred Gaul; "compliments form a coin in which I never yet desired a payment. If any reproach is due to me, it is from forbearing to take offence where I believe that no offence was intended. Though I am not an Englishman, the gentlemen who seek justice at your hands are all of that nation. This young gentleman," pointing to Eveline, "is of high birth in Ireland. This gentleman," pointing to Simpson, "is a distinguished naval officer; and this gentleman," pointing to the true-hearted Spanker, "also follows the profession of the sea."

"Me bery glad to shake your hand," cried Toussaint, extending his hand first to Evelyn and then to the others, and seeming to discover in the countenance of the former something that gave him especial pleasure to contemplate. Then, finding himself rather at a loss to carry on the conversation in English, he added, as he turned round to De Passoa—

"Tell them, they may rely on my doing justice to their wrongs as

far as shall lie in my power. I will give you in charge to one of my aides-de-camp to keep you as safe as possible from harm; and you had better each of you mount a cockade of our colours; for though I have taken what steps are in my power to prevent any excesses, yet among so large a body of undisciplined troops"—a mild term, as our friends thought, for such an assemblage—"I fear that you will witness some frightful scenes, when we arrive in the town; tell me briefly what is the particular point you have at heart."

On hearing this invitation, De Passoa hastily ran over the facts of the case as they then stood. Toussaint shook his head when he found that our friends required from him the release of parties held prisoners in a French line-of-battle ship, assuring them, that if it depended upon any of the shore authorities, they might rely on their obtaining their wishes;—"But," said Toussaint very emphatically, "my strength only exists on the land; and to tempt me to exert it on the sea, is to render me utterly powerless. If, however, the vessel remains in harbour after we get possession of the town, I certainly will open my batteries upon her; and should she surrender, you may rely on gaining your wishes. In the mean while you have found the only point of refuge the island affords; and if fortune will but second your wishes, I'll do the same." Having arrived at this conclusion, Toussaint once more shook hands with the party all round, and waving his hand for the next batch of suitors to advance, our friends returned to their tent.

"What do you think of our position?" said De Passoa to Eveline, as they gained the inside of their canvas walls.

"Badly enough," was the reply; "but we have achieved all that was in our power."

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## CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

### WHICH TREATS OF THE NOTIONS OF MRS. PONTIFEX ON LOVE AND LOVERS—A DISTINCTION WITH A DIFFERENCE.

While thus engaged with the friends of our heroine on shore, it may not be amiss to revert to the proceedings relative to that young lady which took place on board the man-of-war, where we left Nora, Archdeacon Pontifex, and she whom he had one time delighted to call his better half. How unequally must Fate seem to have divided the goods of this world among tailors! since while they themselves are miserably conscious of being in their own persons each of them *only* a ninth of a man, they can thus look round upon a Benedict like Archdeacon Pontifex, and behold him revelling in the superiority of being a man and a half. But this may be thought a digression; and to come at once to the story:—Nora's perplexity and fears grew to a most dark complexion, when she found that her messenger, the rugged Spanker, did not return, nor any one of her party appear to render the slightest assistance. When, however, the time passed over, and she found that

the seventy-four was not only about to unmoor, but to go to sea, her apprehensions reached to a pitch of agony and despair, that little danger could have augmented. She debated within her own mind, what were the probabilities of the case. If she sent for her cruel persecutor, and insisted on a release from this imprisonment, an imprisonment which amounted to forcible abduction, there came the reflection, that her sending for him into her presence might be construed into some species of encouragement covertly given to his suit; while it was very improbable that he should accede now to a mere simple request, after having mocked at every prayer and claim for her enlargement already made. It then occurred to her, that to make no effort for her freedom, at the very moment when the ship appeared to be on the point of sailing—she knew not whither—must in the ungenerous commander's eyes appear a direct submission to the fate inflicted. It was just barely possible, that, wearied with her obstinacy and refusals, he might at last give way; as a middle course, it now occurred to her that if she despatched to him Mrs. Archdeacon, this lady could urge the justice of her (Nora's) liberation with equal force with herself, but without those objections that would attend any interview of her own. As for the Archdeacon, she might as well have sent a child; the imperative mood was one which the first scholar in Europe conjugated but very indifferently, while his wife certainly excelled in that department. As Nora was on the point of summoning the female dignitary to her assistance, the door opened, and in walked Mrs. Archdeacon herself.

"I am so glad to see you!" said Nora; "I was on the very point of sending to you."

"For what purpose?"

"I wish you to go to the French officer in command of this ship, —to implore—to insist, that we should be set on shore, before the vessel leaves this anchorage."

"Ah, my dear," returned Mrs. Archdeacon, "that was the very point on which I wanted to talk to you. I have such good news!"

"Good news," repeated Nora; "I began to fear that such a sentence was doomed never to reach my ears again. Can it be possible that you come to prepare me for my departure?"

"Departure! departure! no, child; what can put such nonsense into your head? We're going to have a most agreeable cruise to some delightful port not far from here, and coming back again. I told the captain I thought you would like it as well as myself."

"Then go directly and tell him you have made a mistake, that I would not go on any account whatever. All I ask, all I beg, all I entreat, is to be set on shore immediately, and restored to my friends."

"Friends, child! I am quite surprised to hear you speak in such a way. You seem to forget that you are *my* governess, to say nothing of *my* being the only matron of the party. What can you want to join a pack of men on shore for? But that's always the way with you young married women—you never can believe yourselves happy out of your husband's company. Why don't you take a lesson from me? You see how comfortably I and the Archdeacon get on together. If my duty

compelled me to stay away a whole twelvemonth from him, you would never hear me complain."

"No, I dare say not, ma'am; but it is impossible for me to mistake the attentions of the commander of this vessel; and it is equally impossible that those attentions can be anything but odious in the extreme; and therefore it would be more proper for me to remain in any other place than this ship. And as you must be well aware that a husband's society is the only protection a married woman ought to know,—and as, indeed, I have only entered your family from a belief that I should be able to continue under the guardianship of that intimate connexion, who for the same reason became your husband's secretary,—I do hope, under these circumstances, you will interpose the weight of your authority to have me immediately set on shore. It's very true, I have no right to influence or derange the proceedings of yourself or Mr. Archdeacon; but if it is not convenient for you, madam, to be landed here, as you once proposed, I must beg very respectfully to quit your service."

"Heaven bless me, what a silly girl you are!" returned Mrs. Pontifex, laughing immoderately; "but I am so glad I have it in my power to silence all your fears, even though it is at the expense of one of my own secrets! But will you promise to keep it very faithfully if I tell you?"

"I hope, madam, it is hardly necessary at this period of our acquaintance to make any such assertion. You must be quite confident that no inducement could ever lead me to betray the least important communication you can make."

"Well, I do believe that of you, although you are so young—so listen. You believe that the French commander here is making love to you."

"I should be sorry, madam, to dignify his conduct with any appellation half so honourable. For I hold that no married woman can be made love to, unless she is equally criminal herself."

"Fie, fie, my dear, you don't know what you are talking about; this language is exceedingly wrong in so very young a person. Besides, it's altogether a mistake."

"Without attempting to go into that point now, Mrs. Pontifex—"

"Mrs. *Archdeacon* Pontifex, if you please, madam."

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Archdeacon Pontifex; but, however, without attempting to go into the second question which you have just raised, it is enough for me to know that the French commander's attentions to me are equally detestable and dishonourable."

"Oh! but my dear madam, allow me altogether to undeceive you. The exquisite joke of the affair is, that the French commander is not paying any attentions to you whatever."

"What, Mrs. Archdeacon!" exclaimed Nora, in the utmost surprise, beginning at first to entertain some fears that the French commander had found some means of corrupting over to his assistance this female luminary of the church.

"Yes, you may be as much surprised as you like; but I can assure you that his attention to yourself is all a feint, and a pretence to hide some other matter."

"Impossible, Mrs. Archdeacon! From whom did you gain this intelligence?"

"From himself."

"Then he has been deceiving you."

"Impossible, impossible, madam! I am not to be deceived;" and Mrs. Archdeacon drew up her stag-like neck with an air of the most insulted virtue.

"But, Mrs Archdeacon, one of us must be deceived."

"That's very likely, madam."

"Well, I'm sure, I did not think it probable *I* could have been mistaken upon the subject, madam."

"I dare say you did not."

"Well; but, Mrs. Archdeacon, won't you inform me on what grounds you come to this conclusion? I am sure I should be only too happy to find that you are right. Will you not so far confide in me, as you before hinted, as to prove to me that your impressions on the point are correct?"

"No, madam; I must say the tone and temper of mind you have just shown, is not of a character likely to elicit confidence from me, more especially on so important, I may well say so delicate, a subject as the present."

"My fortune is certainly very hard," returned poor Nora, the tears forcing one another rapidly over her handsome cheeks; "I find myself thrown on an unknown quarter of the world, with only one friend of my own sex, and she suddenly, for some cause, I know not what, refuses to continue me in her confidence."

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Archdeacon, considerably mollified by this proof of her power, "I am glad you see how improperly you have behaved, because it will lead you to take greater care for the future; but if I do intrust you with the real facts of the French commander's case, will you promise me solemnly not to breathe one word of it to any one?"

"Certainly!" said Nora, her wonder increasing every moment, "I have no hesitation in making you such a promise in the most solemn manner I possibly can."

"Well, my dear, that's like a good girl—that's what I expected of you; but remember, more especially, you must not say a word of it to my husband, because he is not a man of the world, and does not understand these little matters."

"Oh, certainly, madam. I should never think of taking your husband into my confidence; of course that would never do."

"Exactly, my dear, you are quite right; and though you have been a married woman but a short time, I see it's been quite long enough to allow your sense of propriety to dictate to you in these matters. And now what do you think my secret is?"

"I am sure, Mrs. Archdeacon, it is utterly impossible for me to tell."

"Well, I *am* surprised that you can't guess it; haven't you seen anything?"

Nora waited for a few minutes in thought, but nothing occurred to her, and at last she was obliged to say,

"No, madam, I must admit I have not seen anything very particular, except those attentions of which I have complained."

"Pooh, pooh, child, you can see nothing. Are you not observing?"

"Why, madam, I endeavour to observe all I can."

"Well, then, it is very extraordinary! One would have thought that such a marked matter could never have escaped any one. I should have seen it long ago, but there is no accounting. Well, my dear, the real fact of the case is this—"

Here Mrs. Archdeacon paused, and went through one or two little feminine manœuvres, by which bashful ladies are generally supposed to indicate overwhelming diffidence and modesty, a sort of alternate bridling up and holding down the head, an ogling of nothing, and glancing at nobody, which may be better understood than described. But as Nora did not come to her assistance with any surmises tending to anticipate what she meant, Mrs. Archdeacon, after a delicate pause of a few minutes, was obliged to proceed herself.

"The real fact of the matter, my dear, is this: the French commander in reality entertains a profound respect and regard—mind, my dear, nothing more!—don't misunderstand me for the world!—a sort of respectful friendship, you understand."

"Yes, ma'am, I perfectly understand; but all I can say is, if that's the case, he does not take the proper mode of showing it for me."

"For *you*—no, not for *you*."

"Then for whom?"

"Why for *me*, to be sure."

"For *you*, Mrs. Archdeacon!" exclaimed Nora in great surprise, starting back a few paces, and wholly unable to conceal a slight smile, which the other, perceiving with all a woman's intuitive quickness, immediately answered with a corresponding frown, retorting back upon her quickly,

"Yes, I said for *me*, ma'am; and if I mistake not, you must have heard me perfectly well. Is there anything so surprising, I should be glad to know, in a gentleman expressing a sentiment of friendship?"

"Oh, certainly not—certainly not, Mrs. Archdeacon; I was only surprised at finding under how great a mistake I had been labouring, to have imagined these attentions were directed to myself," said the fair little hypocrite, endeavouring to back out of her error as quickly as possible. "That was the cause of my surprise, which you must admit was very natural."

"Why yes, as for that, I must admit that it may have been," said the elder lady, completely taken in by this explanation on the part of her youthful rival; "but now I hope you see how the real facts of the case, as I have stated them to you, agree with the apparent attentions of the lieutenant to you."

This was a fair puzzler for Nora; for the very point on which Mrs. Archdeacon seemed to expect her perfect understanding and acquiescence, was the very one on which she was most puzzled, and which she felt most inclined to deny. What could she say? At first she pretended to make a motion of acquiescence with her head, hoping that her

senior, with her usual volubility, would run on; but this would not do, for Mrs. Archdeacon was bent on no partial victory, but a perfect conquest.

"Don't you see Nora? *now*, I ask you, don't you understand?"

Thus forcibly urged, Nora could no longer escape, but was obliged to come to a direct reply, which she accordingly did, but very timidly, saying,

"Why really, madam, I do not quite comprehend how the French commander can hope to show a virtuous friendship for you, by paying the most improper addresses to me."

"Child, I tell you, he has never paid any addresses to you. How very stupid you are! I shall be quite provoked with you directly. I wonder you can't see the case as it stands. The real facts of our mutual position are these:—the French commander has for me a sort of—ahem—a kind of—you understand."

"Not exactly, Mrs. Archdeacon, I confess," said Nora, who didn't feel particularly pleased with the appellation of 'stupid,' and was determined not to assist her calumniator in the very awkward explanation she had undertaken. Mrs. Archdeacon, on the other hand, bit her lip, on finding she was thus called upon to define what certainly would have sounded much better without any definition. Having got into the mire, however, there was no alternative left her but to go through it.

"Why, you see, my dear, the French commander—I was going to observe, feels for me a kind of a—that is to say, there is a degree of friendship between us, which induces him to feel a degree of pleasure in my society. Well, my dear, there is no harm in that."

"No, ma'am, probably not," said Nora, very tenderly, "probably not," scarcely liking to show her decided disapprobation of such a step, and still less choosing to say anything that might commend it.

"Why, of course there can't be any harm in it. How can there be? where can be the harm in an accomplished, gentleman-like man solacing himself, after the arduous duties of his profession, in the society of a witty, clever woman? On the other hand, is it to be expected that our sex are to forego every species of fascination towards mankind at large merely because they have happened to show a little partiality to one individual in marrying him? I say, certainly not."

"Of course, ma'am, you're the best judge."

"Of course I am; and this, I say, is the French commander's position: he, like a prudent, sensible man, knows that I, as a woman of character, and having a husband on board, wouldn't like to have these little attentions paid me, unless one of my own sex remained also in the ship as a sort of safeguard against anything the world might say; and so, don't you see, the clever fellow has been making love to you as a sort of foil, a kind of device to show to my husband and the other officers of the ship, that it is a mere feeling of general gallantry which thus induces him, as it were, to pay marked attention to every lady alike? Now, therefore, when you see this is the case, of course all your own fears will cease, and you will have no longer any objection to remain on board with me: for, after all, you must admit that the people are very civil here,

which might not be the case if we went on shore; and the commander's society is that of an agreeable, intelligent person; and though I have every possible respect for the Archdeacon, as every lady ought to have for her husband, yet still, when one knows all a man's thoughts and modes of speech, opinions, and so on, one certainly does begin to lose one's acute relish for his companionship, more especially if it be never varied. So now I hope you'll remain on board, as I am sure I must have long ago satisfied all your scruples as to the commander having any attachment for you;—haven't I?"

If any sum of money at poor Nora's command could have prevented Mrs. Archdeacon from putting such a question, she certainly would most willingly have given it: for as to answering it in the affirmative, the thing was impossible; and any other answer, she foresaw, would create the direst quarrel. When, therefore, she heard the query put, she endeavoured to remain silent; but this the other would not for an instant permit—not that we for a moment mean to assert the lady had anything like jealousy in her composition; yet, still one thing was quite clear, that the French commander must be false to one of them; no gratifying knowledge to any woman, nor, by the way, to any man either—we must be candid enough to admit that. Mrs. Archdeacon's anger, at any rate, be the cause what it might, reached a very alarming pitch, when she perceived that Nora tried to evade the answer to this question. She therefore repeated it much more energetically:

"I say, madam, do you not most plainly perceive that it is utterly impossible that this man can for an instant have entertained any sort of idea of paying his addresses in any degree to yourself?"

"Why, madam, really," simpered forth the distressed Nora, "I do not see anything in what you have told me, to alter the opinion I had originally formed of his conduct."

"No!" screamed Mrs. Archdeacon. "Then what sort of proof do you require? Do you dare for an instant to disbelieve me?"

"No, madam, I do not think of it for a second."

"Do you know I had it from himself word for word as I told it you?"

"That is very likely, madam," said Nora; "but I can't see how that alters the matter."

"What, then, is it possible"—and the bare supposition seemed to give Mrs. Archdeacon such surprise, as almost to deprive her of breath and utterance,—"Do you—can you—dare you—think it possible that he has purposely tried to deceive me?"

"On that point, Mrs. Archdeacon," said Nora, determined not to be browbeaten, "I shall give no opinion; but I am sufficiently able to judge from what I have seen myself, to form a very correct notion as to his conduct, which nothing that I have yet heard has at all tended to shake."

"Well, young lady, in your station, this language is very pretty—very dutiful—very elegant indeed. Pray may I ask, madam, since you are so sceptical—since you have such a tendency to believe that every

one you meet is in love with you, what, in the name of fortune, will you accept as sufficient proof of the correctness of my view of the question?"

"Of that, Mrs. Archdeacon, nothing will convince me."

"I thought as much; upon my word I thought as much! Modest young woman! Of course, every one is to fall in love with you—every creature you meet is to admire you; you are to be the leading personage; no one, of course, is to bestow a thought on myself; I am to be nobody! of course no one is to admire me; that is to be a perfect heresy when you are in the way. Modest, unassuming young woman! one really does not know how enough to commend you. As for myself, no doubt you have perfectly made up your mind, that nobody ever did, or ever could, think me worthy of the slightest attention." Here Mrs. Archdeacon stormed up and down the room, as if she would have spurned the very planks which supported her, turning round every now and then on Nora with more "last words," whose vehemence of utterance is much beyond our powers of language to convey.

"Why, Mrs. Archdeacon, I am sorry to find you have taken what I have said so much amiss."

"Taken what you have said amiss! No, indeed, madam, not I. To me I assure you it is a matter of perfect indifference not only as to what you may say, but as to how or when you may say it."

"Well, Mrs. Archdeacon, let that case be as it may, you are quite mistaken, I assure you, in accusing me of thinking for a moment that you are not likely to attract regard. In the present case of which you have been speaking, it is very true you do not know what private causes may exist to render particularly hateful the conduct of the French commander; and as for yourself, I can readily believe how strongly attached others may become to you, by knowing how warm is the affection which I feel for you myself."

"*You*, indeed, talk of affection to me! What's the affection of a *woman* for a woman?—Envy, hatred malice, and all uncharitableness!! I am surprised at your audacity. I detest woman's littleness, madam;" and Mrs. Archdeacon here advanced to the very feet of the terrified Nora, bridling and tossing her head in the utmost disdain, and scrutinizing our heroine with glances of the most penetrating supercilious-ness from crown to toe. "And what is still more, I detest their vanity. It is their vanity, madam, that renders them ridiculous! It is their vanity, madam, which renders them so unamiable; it is by their vanity that ninety-nine out of every hundred of them are ruined or rendered unhappy! That vanity, which leads them to think that every one is in love with themselves, and every person they meet an adorer; that vanity which begets in them so much envy at every companion who has the slightest pretension to beauty. It is unnecessary to name who I mean, madam! No, indeed, I like the esteem of men, for in their manly and straightforward character you can place some dependence; you can at least believe that they won't deceive you with a soft voice, or take you in by their appearance. And since you have forced it from me, madam, I must honestly tell you, your husband has an

opinion of me very different from your own: your husband is sincerely attached to me; he knows how to admire a lady of mind and person."

"My husband!" shrieked Nora, convulsed with laughter, and in a moment of unguarded surprise and merriment at this mistake of Mrs. Archdeacon's, who, after thus railing against her own sex, and talking *par préférence* of the baser animal, had fallen into the ludicrous blunder of instancing one who was only a *sham* man at the best—an animated coat and breeches, filled and put in motion by one of those very women whom she so detested and abhorred!—as she in her passion said, though far in reality from thinking or feeling anything of the sort; for we must do Mrs. Archdeacon the justice to say, that though she had her little foibles—as which of us has not?—she was, after all, a noble-hearted creature in the main, as the sequel of our story will fully prove. However, in the present case, she had got into her altitudes, and certainly evinced no very great intention of quitting them, but proceeded—

"Ay, madam, I say your husband is devotedly attached to me; and though you may pretend to laugh, you must know, as well as I do, that you are as jealous of me as one creature can be of another."

"Really, Mrs. Archdeacon, on my honour I assure you I am not," replied Nora, trying in vain to look grave; for besides every other weighty reason for not being jealous of Mrs. Archdeacon, was this very potent one, her intimate knowledge that Eveline entertained the greatest antipathy towards the female light of the church, which she, Eveline, was only able to mask from the politic reason of making everything smooth and agreeable to Nora. However, Mrs. Archdeacon no sooner beheld a suppressed smile on the countenance of the latter, than her rage appeared again, with tenfold fury; she looked as if she almost doubted the evidence of her eye-sight, and, panting for breath, as if to say or do something which should convince the heretic against her will, she gasped forth rapidly—

"Well, madam, on—my—word, your vanity and assurance have reached beyond all bounds!—Do you pretend not only to disbelieve your husband's attachment to me, but even to assert that you're not jealous? Well, I declare, this is the most outrageous—— Why, woman," screamed Mrs. Archdeacon, "your husband's attentions and regards, which he has expressed to me, have been carried to such a point as often to make me debate whether I ought not, in my duty, as an upright woman, and an honest and virtuous wife, to communicate his proceedings to my husband, and put myself under his protection!!"

There was something so utterly ridiculous in the idea of an enormous creature, like Mrs. Pontifex, putting herself under the protection of a little morsel such as her husband undeniably was—and that too against the improper attentions of a woman dressed up in man's clothes, that Nora, though possessed of every wish to do the proper and respectful thing, was unable to restrain herself from bursting into the most immoderate laughter.

"How dare you, madam?" screamed the other lady, almost beside herself with passion; and still the more she stormed, the more excru-

ciating became the merriment of Nora; and still, the more Nora laughed, the more boundless became the wrath of Mrs. Pontifex: "How dare you behave yourself in this way?" repeated the latter lady, advancing to the side of her governess, with an aspect as much inflamed as if she actually contemplated some personal chastisement—

"—What is the matter? what has discomposed you, my dear?" suddenly interposed the quiet sleepy tones of a third party. No one who had ever heard that soporific voice could for an instant doubt to whom it belonged. Nora looked up, and there stood the Archdeacon! The sight of his composed, tranquil, and most peacable-looking phiz, contrasted with the highly-coloured and still more highly-excited countenance of his wife, and the idea of the former guarding and defending the latter, seemed to Nora the more ridiculous the more she thought of it, and instead of staying her merriment, caused it to increase to the last pitch. This of course made Mrs. Archdeacon still more furious: again and again she demanded, stamping with her foot, "What, madam, do you dare to mean?" and the more energetically this question was asked, the more wholly unable did Nora feel herself to answer it.

"What is the matter, my dear? Why do you thus agitate yourself?" repeated the husband.

"How can you ask that question, Mr. Archdeacon? Am I not the most insulted, injured woman, it is possible to conceive? and can you stand there, and ask in that imperturbable way, why I agitate myself?"

"Well, well, my dear, how was I to know that you are insulted, without explaining it to me? Indeed, I may say, how am I to know it yet? What is it you complain of? What are the facts?"

"What is it to you, sir, what the facts are? I tell you I am insulted!"

"So you say, my dear; but I don't see how I am to help you, if you won't tell me who or what it is insults you."

"Well, then, sir, it is nothing less than this;—this woman's husband has been making downright love to me, and when I tell her of it, instead of promising to bring him to his senses, you see she's vastly amused at it. It's a very fine joke for her—serves for her mirth!"

"What does, my dear?"

"Merciful heavens! you'll drive me raving mad between you! Have I not told you that she pleases to take for her amusement the fact of her husband choosing to make love to me?"

"But has he made love to you, my dear?"

"Why, don't I tell you he has? Don't I tell you he has made the most direct attempts upon your honour?"

"Ah, indeed! I'm sorry to hear it, but," said the archdeacon, quietly moving towards the door, and then adding, as he was upon the point of leaving the cabin, "as long as you take care of your honour, my dear, I have no fear about mine; and have long been convinced that both are in the very safest keeping."

"But, Mr. Archdeacon, I insist that you take notice of this."

"Do you, my dear?"

"To be sure I do."

"Very well, my dear, I suppose I must; but there is plenty of time for that, you know, because the young man is not here. I can't say anything till we meet again; in the mean while, it does strike me that you may be quite safe about the propriety of his attention, or his wife would not be so much amused at it. Good morning, my dear. I hope you won't agitate yourself. I dare say it will all prove to be a mistake;" and the Archdeacon went out of the cabin with as much placidity as if a favourite cat had been mewing for a caress, and he had kindly bestowed it on the animal at parting. By this time Nora's mirth had settled down into a calm philosophical smile of amusement, and it being of course too late to do any service, she now began a thousand apologies to the outraged Mrs. Archdeacon, who, versatile in her wrath, now seemed inclined to be as much, if not more, incensed with her husband, than she had previously been with Nora.

"Upon my word I don't know which takes the matter most coolly, you or Mr. Archdeacon Pontifex! Here's a gentleman pays improper addresses to me;—I complain to his wife, and she laughs at me;—I mention it to my husband, and he says, 'Very well, my dear.'—I don't know what an insulted or injured woman may mean. Certainly not; but if this is all the return made for my sacrifices—I, who as a girl, might have had any match I pleased—I, who have acted the part of a kind and considerate friend—all I can say is, I shall know better for the future, at any rate. I hope, madam, that you are satisfied at last that it is to me, and not to yourself, the French commander's addresses are paid."

"Why, truly, Mrs. Archdeacon, I cannot see that anything has transpired to alter my opinion on that subject."

"Well!" sighed the reverend lady, in despair, "all I can say is, some people are very hard to be convinced; but however, if it is possible to assure your mind on this subject, I'll do it."

"Why, Mrs. Archdeacon, I don't see how that can be possible."

"Oh, nothing on earth more easy. Give me pen, ink, and paper."

"Here they are, madam; but before you commit yourself to anything, I hope you'll not find it necessary to introduce my name."

"Stuff, child, stuff. What I propose to do is this—you say the commander's attention is directed to you. Now I have repeated to you his assurance that it is intended for myself; in this it seems you don't believe. Now what I propose to do, is simply to write to the commander, and say, that it is absolutely necessary, before we go to sea, (for our comfort as ladies,) for one of us to go ashore to make a few purchases, before the voyage; and then we'll put it to him, as we are his prisoners of war, to choose which of us shall go."

"But what inference will you draw from that, madam?"

"Why this, of course, that he will keep on board the lady for whom his attentions are intended."

"Well, but suppose he should keep me on board, consider in what a dreadful position I shall be placed."

"Impossible! have I not told you over and over again, that he does not care one straw whether you remain on board or no, or go on shore?"

"Yes, madam, but suppose—, just suppose for one instant that it should be the other way, what course would you take? Do you mean to say that you would go ashore, and leave me to any fate which this atrocious man could endeavour to inflict upon me?"

At this question Mrs. Archdeacon remained silent for a few seconds, (rather an unusual thing, it must be confessed, for her,) and then, after taking one or two paces up and down the cabin, she replied—

"Even in that case you would have the protection of my husband, on board."

"As to that, it is very true I have every respect for the archdeacon, and should be very sorry, even for a moment, to say any thing that could reflect upon him; but still, I leave it to yourself to pronounce what kind of protection a gentleman can be esteemed, who, in the case of his own wife, takes so very coolly the attentions of another man."

"Very true, madam—very true, my dear friend," said Mrs. Pontifex, warming in her manner towards Nora on the instant; "I see you feel for me. It is very true the archdeacon is the first scholar in Europe; but little do women know who marry fine scholars, or indeed any man connected with letters, or authorship, the fate in store for them. I do assure you, my dear, often and often have I been kept awake till three and four o'clock in the morning, while the Archdeacon has been sitting up reading some musty, detestable, abominable old book; and I have seen him lie on a sofa a whole day, turning over leaf after leaf, and never addressing to me a single word; and would you believe it, after patiently watching this infatuation for two or three long hours, I have only taken a seat by him, (just as a sort of remembrance that there was such a person in the world,) and all that I have got for my pains was the archdeacon saying, in that odious, quiet, tranquil tone of his, 'My dear, you're sitting in my light.' I have been so mad with his conduct, I have got up on purpose, early in the morning, and gone down and torn the book in pieces, and given it to the girl and seen her light the fire with it; and, can you credit it? even after this it made no sort of difference—the very next day you'd see him getting another book, and doing the very self-same thing again, until I have hardly known how to bear myself; more especially if there didn't happen to be a few agreeable young men in our diocese to call in, and help one to pass away the time."

"Why, really, Mrs. Archdeacon, jealousy could never have extended to a book?"

"Jealousy! my dear; ahem—ahem—hem. Why, do you call that jealousy?"

"Really, Mrs. Archdeacon, if it isn't jealousy, it's not very far from it."

"Well, however, my dear—however that may be, to resume—I agree with you that the archdeacon is not, perhaps, quite so efficient a protector as a young married woman ought to have; and, therefore, it just occurs to me, that in case the French commander should turn out to be the

base and improper person you suspect, and send me on shore instead of you, this is the way in which we'll punish him—we'll contrive to disguise you up in my clothes, and so send you on shore, under the charge of the archdeacon."

"But how, in that case," said Nora, "will it be possible for me to carry with me my unfortunate child?"

"Why, to be sure, that is rather perplexing; there is some little difference in our figure. Don't you think we might use the child as a sort of padding?"

"Gracious heavens! Mrs. Archdeacon; what are you dreaming of?"

"Oh, that wouldn't do, would it?" said the other, who did not seem to be quite *au fait* in bestowing that care which children generally are supposed to require.

"Certainly not, Mrs. Archdeacon; the poor little infant would infallibly be smothered!"

"Well, then, I tell you what will at any rate answer. I'll write to say that the child must be taken on shore by one of us, and leave it to the commander to signify which shall go: by this means we shall find out what his designs really are, and not only be enabled to rescue you, but the child also."

"Well, it strikes me that this is a plan which may answer very well; I have no longer any objection to your writing the note."

This knotty point being settled, Mrs. Archdeacon sat down and wrote, in the terms she had proposed, to the French commander; simply stating that the child was drooping, from its long confinement on board the ship, and begging that one of the ladies might be allowed to take it on shore. As no particular stress was laid on the selection of the mother for this office, the commander was left quite at liberty to choose as he pleased, and before many minutes had elapsed, an answer to their note was brought back, addressed in the French commander's hand, to Mrs. Archdeacon who had written to him. This was very cunningly contrived; for, by this means he appeared to have escaped making any choice whatever; for after a lady's writing to him, it was scarcely in her power to say that he had made any decided selection in merely returning her an answer. On breaking the seal, the contents of the document ran thus:—

"Madam,

"I have had the honour to receive your note, and in accordance to your wishes, I have ordered the boat to be ready to convey you immediately to the shore. I have the honour to remain," &c. &c. &c.

On perusing this *billet*, the countenance of Mrs. Archdeacon grew pale with anger, while that of Nora with fear, lest, taking the Frenchman at his word, Mrs. Archdeacon should quit the ship, and she be left without the only protection she had on board. However, in this respect she certainly did her friend great injustice. After remaining a few minutes in mute surprise, the female dignitary turned suddenly round to Nora, and without a particle of her former pique against our heroine remaining, exclaimed—

"Now, my dear, you *have* convinced me what a base wretch the creature is, I'll help you to defeat him!"

Without any further loss of time, Nora joyfully embraced this offer; and repairing to the wardrobe of Mrs. Archdeacon, selected one of her dresses, best known and usually worn on board, and by dint of great industry in the padding and stuffing departments, at last our heroine, with the further aid of a little paint, rouge, thick veiling, &c., presented a very tolerable impersonation of the "first scholar in Europe;" or rather, we should say, the better half of him. With her frame trembling in every limb, and a pulse that beat beyond all possibility of counting, Nora crossed the quarter-deck of the French man-of-war towards the boat, that was ready for her use; scarcely had she left the cabin, when at her first glance she—alive, of course, to every danger,—encountered the object of her horror, the French commander, on the opposite side of the quarter-deck. Everything seemed to swim around her, as she contemplated the possibility, or, as she afterwards called it, the inevitability of his addressing her as Mrs. Archdeacon, and at once finding out the trick that had been put upon him; so far, however, from this, either by accident or design, he never even turned round his head to take a single look, but allowed her, unquestioned and in safety, to gain the gangway, and hurry down with every possible speed into the boat, that was destined for a very different end than that of her escape. Mrs. Archdeacon, who with her servant was peeping from one of the cabin windows, vociferated, in an agony of rage, as she beheld our heroine's departure—

"To think of that!—the villain could even let me go away without so much as wishing me good-bye! Oh! I am so glad that I discovered him—his villany is properly rewarded. Well, well, sir; we shall settle accounts presently."

And with this comforting assurance she locked the door against all intrusion, and went to another window which commanded the departure of the boat from along-side.

"Well, I declare! Why, actually, they have put my husband into the boat."

"Aye, and see, ma'am," added the servant, "if there isn't all our luggage too."

"Well if this isn't a deep laid scheme of villany I never heard of one; the poor girl was right after all."

As to the correctness of Nora's suspicions, there could be indeed little doubt of that, and so indeed she felt, when she arrived in the boat and beheld the preparations that had been made for getting rid of every one but herself; while even the Archdeacon, for a moment abandoning his reveries, exclaimed,—

"Don't you think, my dear, it would have been as well to have brought that poor governess with us?"

The "first scholar" never having been taken into his wife's secret originally, and therefore still remaining wholly unaware who sat beside him, Nora felt this to be rather an awkward place to explain in, with all the French seamen sitting round her, one of whom by some unfortunate

accident might understand English; she therefore quietly gave the Archdeacon as gentle a squeeze as she could, and he accustomed to receive his orders from head-quarters, readily taking this as a command to be silent, sunk back without another word into the stern-sheets of the boat, deeply immersed in some abstruse question, which had as little to do with his present occupation as possible.

The French man-of-war having been lying at some distance from the shore, it took many minutes' pulling to obtain thel anding-place, and every moment that passed by in their progress thither, inflicted a thousand tortures on the unfortunate Nora; her fears and apprehensions were busy on board the French vessel, conjecturing how long the French commander would remain in ignorance of his victim's triumph, and whether he would by any possibility discover it in time sufficient to take steps for defeating its ultimate success. In this respect, however, Fortune so far favoured her, that she had a very efficient ally in the person of Mrs. Archdeacon. About a quarter of an hour after the boat had started from the vessel, the commander, thinking that he might at length intrude on the unfortunate Nora without any interference on the part of friends, approached the cabin, and knocked for admittance. Not getting any answer, he became more importunate in his demands, and applied a degree of force to the door, threatening to demolish its frail consistence. Mrs. Archdeacon, who felt that her hour of triumph was now at hand, sent the servant with a message that the commander could not come in till the return of Mrs. Archdeacon. The servant was a sharp girl, and Nora had taken great pains to teach her the French language, and this aided by her own efforts, and occasional conversation with some of the men's wives on board, had rendered her perfectly competent to undertake an abigail's part at translating through the keyhole.

"Tell your mistress," said the French commander, when he heard this message, "that the old harridan will never more set foot in this vessel. I have got rid of her at last, and never intend to see her face again."

"Don't you, you impudent villain!" exclaimed Mrs. Pontifex herself, her intense rage overcoming every other more prudential consideration, and throwing open the door which she suddenly unlocked, she darted out upon the astonished little Frenchman, and before he could be at all prepared for such a *coup-de-main*, gave him so tremendous a blow on his face, that he not only staggered under the violence of it, but with difficulty retained his footing. This summary vengeance inflicted, Mrs. Archdeacon, like a prudent general that has made a successful *sortie*, instantly recalled her forces within the citadel, and quickly slamming the door, before the commander could either foresee or prevent so exquisite a manœuvre, locked, bolted, and relocked it, and set up a shout of triumph from within. This successful piece of revenge on the French commander, at once dissipated every lingering spark of resentment against Nora, filled her heart with most intense good humour, and made her rejoice with unbounded exultation over that act of generosity which had left herself in the power of a disappointed scoundrel,

in order to secure the escape of his victim. The determined vigour, however, of Mrs. Pontifex, had somewhat endangered the last. Could she have kept her secret until the return of the boat, all would have been well; but no sooner did the Frenchman recover the electric shock of the lady's hand, than he at once perceived the cheat he had sustained, and pouring forth a volley of French oaths, he darted to the ship's side, snatched a spy-glass, and directing it on the rapidly diminishing boat that bore Nora to the shore, instantly detected to his unspeakable gratification that he might yet defeat our heroine's escape.

"Hoist the recal flag for that boat!" rapidly vociferated the Gallic officer, his cheek still smarting and glowing under its warm salute.

In an instant the recal pendants were fluttering on the maintop-gallant-mast-head of the French seventy-four.

"The recal's hoisted," said the French lieutenant, reporting the fact to his mortified superior.

"Take up your glass," was the reply, "and mark if the signal's seen and answered."

The lieutenant snatched the second telescope, and both for a few seconds anxiously watched to see if the recal signal had been perceived.

"I don't think they see it," said the commander.

"No, sir, I am sure they haven't seen it yet; and in a few seconds more, the barge will double round a point of land, which will shut us out from their view altogether."

"Quick then—quick before they turn—fire a gun—lower the signal a little, and hoist it again! We may thus get their attention. Quick, sir, quick with the gun, they've put her helm round, and there goes her head, another moment and it will be too late."

"Aye, aye, sir," cried the lieutenant, flying down on the main-deck, and in a few seconds a long volume of smoke darted forth from the Frenchman's side; and as the heavy thunder of the cannon was rapidly wafted over the water by the strong breeze then blowing, it reached the ears of the men who were pulling in the boat, and for a moment they laid on their oars.

"They see it, by Jupiter, they see it, we'll have them back on board here after all!" cried the French captain, crowing with delight. Darting from the place where he stood, he snatched the signal halliards out of the hands of the seaman who held them, and having lowered the signal down a few yards, hoisted it up once more, to signify that such was the object of the gun, and that the duty of the boat was to return immediately on board.

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

### WHICH TREATS OF THE LOVE AND SORROWS OF PRESTONE.

We know not if it be so far back in our history, that the memory of our readers runneth not thereto; but if by any accident they should still have a faint recollection of one Master Prestone, and the dismal strait into which Fortune had cast him, perchance they may not feel disinclined to hear what were the sequents of that disastrous night, on which every second that passed by was a fresh death to the unhappy trio that wished and waited for the light of morning. With a sort of dull sensibility that could scarcely be called life, Prestone, whose strength had best withstood the conflict of the night, gazed with a dull hopeless eye on the gradual lightening of the heavy clouds in the eastern sky. Not that he any longer entertained the slightest hope of present rescue or of future life, but rather vacantly watched the only object of novelty and interest, the rising day, while his thoughts wandered with an agonized fondness over scenes far distant, and beings infinitely dear. Though scarcely conscious why he enhanced his present sufferings by the remembrance of past joys and comforts; he nevertheless was unable to prevent himself from recalling the numberless times on which he had risen to enjoy the fresh breeziness of morning upon that beloved portion of the coast, on which much of his infancy had been passed; beside him sat the frantic mother, clasping to her bosom an infant long since dead, and almost endeavouring to cheat herself into the belief that life was only dormant in its curdled veins. As each sparkling sea struck on the wreck, and then poured over her the briny drops, glistening with all the splendour of nature's brilliants in the rapidly increasing light, a low indistinct moan was barely detected by the pitying ear of Prestone to issue from the heart-broken bosom of the patient and enduring sufferer. Not far from them lay, to all appearance perfectly dead, the listless body of the wretched creature, whose pride and vanity had occasioned all the misery around them. With a last effort of consciousness, he had lashed himself to the remains of the foremast-bits; and as the seas washed the deck of the vessel, they floated up the body deluged in water; to let it fall again on the deck, whence nothing but the lashing prevented it being washed into the surf beyond; and in this state of hopeless, helpless, despair, the little party remained for several hours without word or sign passing between them. At length, Prestone became conscious that the wind had gradually changed some points in its direction. This first formed a rallying post for his oppressed senses; and as morning had considerably advanced, he endeavoured to raise himself somewhat from his position, and look about him. But such was the extreme torture of attempting to move—such the paralysing effect of the intense cold of the winter's night, aggravated by the alternations of wet and wind, combined with the length of time he had remained in one posture, for

the sake of the slight additional warmth it conferred, that he no sooner made the effort to regain the use of his feet, than he fell back against the side of the vessel, in such excruciating torments, as made him hastily utter a prayer for speedy death, in preference of such a prolongation of torment. While leaning thus with closed eyes, and a heart whose pulsations were imperceptible to the being whose life they formed, the sound of a distant gun came rolling down the gale, and caused the yet remaining blood to flutter in his bosom with a quickness, that while it almost brought him to faint upon the spot, still plainly told how valued was the life that he had a second since wished to resign. Starting on his feet with a degree of power, that a few seconds since he could scarcely have believed in his possession, in defiance of the gale blowing, and the masses of water which it hurled along, he fixed an eager untiring glance on the weather horizon to search for the vessel that had fired the gun. A long irregular line of light was alone visible, broken here and there by the enormous summit of some foam-capped billow, more enormous than the rest, that reared its shaggy head into the misty line of the distance. Long and anxiously did he look for the column of smoke, which must have arisen from the gun just discharged; none however could he perceive.

"Alas!" said he, mournfully, "this terrific gale has blown away all traces of the smoke, even before I could hear the gun. At any rate the ship must be within sight;" and he once more commenced his search. Not the faintest speck, however, could he discern in the enormous circle the eye took in. "Alas!" continued he, "perhaps that gun may have been fired in the extremity of some distress, not even second to my own, and the unfortunate vessel may have sunk to rise no more."

With one last scrutiny, the unfortunate Prestone was about to resign himself to his destiny, and resume the spot he had so lately quitted, when once more a similar report broke upon his ear; and this time from his better position, the sound appeared to come from an opposite quarter. Turning quickly round, he beheld, to his infinite joy, a crowd of gazers lining the edges of the cliffs in-shore, and the column of smoke drifting rapidly to leeward from the gun which had just been discharged, in all probability to attract the attention of any unfortunate being who might yet be living on the wreck. If such was the intention, it was fully answered in this case. With a last desperate effort of strength, Prestone untied the handkerchief from his neck, and allowing it to flow out upon the breeze, waved it above his head. In an instant he beheld the crowd ashore take off their hats, and wave an answer back; while something like the faintest murmur of the human voice seemed to assert that they had accompanied the action with a cheer. A quarter of an hour before this event occurred, Prestone would have declared it impossible that such a love of existence could ever again have returned, or that the heart, before circulating so feebly, could have bounded in such tumult as that which he now felt raging within him. No sooner did the party on the land perceive that some one still survived the fury of the gale, than a posse of the spectators ascended the beach, and launched a boat for the rescue.

"They come to save us," said Prestone, whispering in the ear of the mother that consolation, the full force of which he was so well able to estimate himself, when he felt the limbs, before so powerless and numbed, now comparatively able to execute the desires of the mind that controlled them, and already beginning to feel the returning warmth of circulation.

"My poor child!" said the mother, clasping the human corse to her bosom, and a large tear slowly running down till it fell on the dead lips of the infant that never more might smile to her embrace. A slight shudder seemed to pass over the countenance of the distracted woman; and her head drooped against the side of the vessel.

"What is the matter, my kind creature?" said Prestone, stooping down and tenderly supporting her head. She returned no answer to the question.

"Are you ill? Cheer up; the boat will soon be here; and once on shore all will be well.

Prestone became alarmed, and tenderly taking her arm, he felt at the wrist, for the indication of her being still alive. No pulse, however, was to be distinguished. He gazed at the lips, but it was impossible to detect the faintest motion of breathing. He lifted an eyelid, but it fell down powerless and paralysed into its former position. The truth was now too apparent. Clasping his hands with more intense agony than his own miseries had been able to call forth, he exclaimed, and indeed too truly, "She is dead!"

In that brief, but melancholy truth, half the joy of his own preservation was already swallowed up. None but those who have been suddenly thrown into situations of great danger and distress, with a companion to share the same sorrows, to be agitated with the same horrors, soothed by the same good fortune, and dependent upon the same hopes, can tell how inexplicably dear the companion of such trials will instantly become, however much a stranger before. Turning away from the melancholy spectacle of the dead parent and her little one, Prestone leant with his hands over the shattered bulwarks, and wept like a boy that first makes acquaintance with deep grief. The solicitude the poor woman had expressed for him, her sex, her affections for her child, all tended in the brief space of the horrid night that had passed, to give her a firm place in his admiration and regard; and it was as if a heavy condition had been fixed to some undoubted advantage, when he found that, however much life might smile upon him, it must be upon him, and him alone; all his warm wishes for her had perished; all grief for her fate was now futile, as the effort of the water to resist the wind. Slowly, and after many an inward struggle, Prestone turned his attention once more to the approaching boat. Much as he tried to crush the glowing feeling, by degrees the love of life grew stronger and stronger within his bosom; the anxiety with which he regarded it, increased with every fresh difficulty over which it mounted, until it had at length approached within a few hundred yards of the bow of the wreck. Already beginning to distinguish those rugged faces, than which nothing human had ever appeared more handsome in his eye, he saw that the steersman had of course endeavoured to pull to windward of the object

he wished to gain. Prestone could now hear the voice of the helmsman hailing him; the exact words were completely lost in the roar of the gale; but as far as they could be made out, they appeared to convey some request in which the word "rope" was mentioned. Prestone immediately took up part of a small coil, which he had already prepared for the purpose, and held it aloft to show his friends. The steersman answered this signal by taking his hat from his head, with the wish, it is supposed, of encouraging Prestone, when, at this moment, the boat rising on a heavy sea, a sudden eddy dashed the command of the rudder from the steersman's hand, the bow of the craft as instantly fell off before the wind, an overwhelming mass of green sea swept the boat fore and aft, aud in another second the black keel, turned upside down, came slowly floating past the wreck, riveting the eyes of Prestone on this sole remaining vestige of his new found friends, while his ears yet rang with the short sharp piercing shriek their agony had called from them in the moment of their sinking. As the capsized bark slowly drifted with the wind towards the shore, from whence it had so lately come, filled with life and hope, and the desire of doing good, Prestone gazed with a degree of horror, which scarcely permitted the power of breathing, while there gradually arose on his mind's eye the scene of misery and distress which must have been thus caused among the numerous spectators lining the distant shore! There, beyond all doubt, must now be watching—the widow suddenly bereaved of the means of existence; the father of his children, and the children of their parents.—The strong warm ties of life, snatched and wrenched in every direction! and this, to save one who, even if he could gain the shore that moment, felt the powers of nature so exhausted by exposure that he greatly doubted whether any care could revive him. Few of us, however, can estimate what we are capable of undergoing until the horrid hour of trial arrives. After the loss of the boat, Prestone remained vacantly gazing at the shore for a long space of time, scarcely conscious of his occupation, and having utterly lost all calculation of the hours. Day brightened up, and by degrees the clouds lightened more and more, as the wind continued shifting still further from its original quarter, until at last out came the sun, making a scene of strong though savage beauty through that whole expanse which but a brief space since had seemed too horrible for any power to adorn. Every crest of foam now sparkled in the beam, and seemed rejoicing in some untold pleasure of which he and his alone were forbidden to partake. The dense blue mass of vapour, which had before canopied the sea, now gathered in high banks about the land, under the dark mass of which the light cliffs on shore shone forth with a golden streak, like a distant line of hope in the lives of the unhappy. Here Prestone could plainly perceive little knots of people gathered together, seemingly gazing at the remains of the unfortunate frigate, and discussing her fate. No effort, however, seemed making for any further attempt at rescue; nor, indeed, did he expect it, for the risk of losing seven or eight more lives in trying for the preservation of his own, he, hopeless as was his position, did not for an instant desire. Some vague impulse, he could scarcely define what, induced him once more to remove the handker-

chief from his neck, and wave it in the air. One of the officers' spy-glasses had been washed from the quarter-deck, and got jammed in among the rigging near him. Applying this to his eye, he watched to see if any notice was taken of his signal; since, however desperate the attempt to put off to the wreck might have been at an earlier part of the day, the wind had for some time been moderating to a point which promised a speedy possibility of communication. Thinking that his little flag might not be observed for want of height, he contrived to fish out a studding-sail boom from one of the hammock nettings, and fixing his handkerchief on this, succeeded, with great difficulty, in getting it upright. A few minutes afterwards, by the aid of his spy-glass, he beheld a lady leave a little cottage under the cliff, and join a knot of men who were standing at the edge of the beach. After the lapse of a few minutes, she went back into the house, and presently returned, accompanied by a man, on whose person Prestone thought he could just discover the glitter of some kind of uniform. A few minutes after these two had approached the others, the whole body moved away a few paces, and a third gun was fired. To this Prestone replied by lowering his signal-post a little, and elevating it again. He then perceived the party on shore go to a boat that lay upon the beach, and the female was the first to enter it; from this she was, however, removed by the others, and led back into the house; after which the rest began slowly to launch the boat towards the sea. With mingled feelings of grief and hope, Prestone beheld this second attempt made for his rescue. It was natural that he should wish, if possible, to escape the horrors of drowning; and yet when he remembered the grief which he experienced on witnessing the first boat lost, he almost prayed that the crew of the second might desist from their most dangerous attempt. With a view of seeing if it were not possible to save such generous-hearted people as those on shore, a risk so frightful as that they undertook, Prestone made an effort to crawl around the deck, and see if anything yet survived that might be converted into a raft; nothing of the sort, however, could he discover. Already he began to resign the project in despair, when his eye alighted on a small cask, which was kept lashed near the foremast, full of fresh water for the seamen's use. Over this a quantity of small wreck had fallen, and hidden all but one end from view. Taking a long draught of the water, which was, however, not a little brackish, he emptied out the remaining contents of the cask, and driving the bung in very tightly, fixed the barrel to a secure lashing, with a long end, which he fastened round his own body, lowered the cask overboard, and then resolutely trusting the rest to Heaven, leaped in himself, and gave the direction of his little bark to the winds. 'Twas an adventurous step to take; but once adopted, Prestone was not a likely person to shrink back; he accordingly struggled on manfully, giving his chief attention to guard against the exhaustion of his own strength, and soon perceived that the wind was quite strong enough to take him to the land. In the mean while, his greatest fear arose lest his friends on shore, not seeing the step he had taken, would pull off to the vessel, and so lose their lives in a vain attempt to assist one no longer on board. He quickly,

however, had the pleasure of perceiving that this was not likely to be the case, since, though the boat was duly launched, and did venture out to his rescue, it attempted to go no nearer to the wreck than just far enough to approach himself, and watch over his safety. By this time the storm had so far moderated, that the task was one of comparative ease; and when at length the rowers came up to the curious contrivance to which Prestone had been driven, he contrived to make them hear a request, that they would only tow him to the land, as this saved time, and might after all perhaps not exhaust him more than making the efforts necessary to be taken on board. They acceded to his request; and picking up the tow-rope from the cask, left the latter as a sort of breakwater to Prestone, and thus pulled as rapidly as they could for the shore. During the latter part of this operation, Prestone scarcely retained enough of life to be dignified by the name of sensibility, though he afterwards remembered perfectly well some old officer holding up his arm as he staggered along the beach, and whispering words of consolation in his ear. Having been immediately taken to the officer's house, and placed in bed, Nature, overcome by the immense exertions she had made, threw the sufferer into the most profound sleep, yet not until he had whispered some incoherent speech relative to others still remaining in the wreck, which, though vague and indefinite in the extreme, was yet sufficiently significant to induce another crew to put off, after the lapse of a few more hours, and bring back the bodies of Fidget and the unfortunate mother, in hopes that care and attention might by some possibility restore them to life. With regard to the woman, all attempts were found unavailing; but extraordinary as it afterwards appeared to Prestone, Fidget gradually exhibited signs of returning existence, sufficient to excite the hopes and perseverance of the humane friends, into whose hands he had fallen; and by the following morning, when Prestone awoke, nearly well, he learned, to his infinite surprise, that a considerable chance existed of Fidget's recovery. This intelligence was conveyed to him by his host, a French officer, employed in the service of the customs on the coast, and whom he had seen on the previous day from the wreck. Prestone having expressed, in the best manner he was able, the deep obligation under which he laboured for the preservation of his life, the kind Frenchman replied, "You must reserve your thanks till you see the person to whom they are really due."

"To whom can that be," asked Prestone, "if not to yourself?"

"To a very different person," was the answer; "but you shall soon have an opportunity of judging for yourself. It was my daughter who insisted on the men putting out to you a second time; for after the loss of the first boat, which has occasioned great distress in our little village, I did not feel that my authority would bear stretching so far as to risk the loss of a second crew;—but your physician has interdicted you from talking—lie quiet—keep yourself still—I will send up to you your breakfast,—give yourself all the repose you can."

It was in vain that Prestone insisted on his being perfectly able to come down stairs; the old man would hear of no such proposition; and

after gently reprimanding him for this early symptom of disobedience, insisted on his remaining in bed, and went down stairs to prevent any further discussion on the subject.

"I owe my life to his daughter!" muttered Prestone, pillowing his head on his hand, and giving way to all those delicious day-dreams that hallow the couch of the slumberer when the first long sleep of the night has passed. "Ah! I do remember," continued he, pursuing the welcome idea, "I saw a lady's figure on the beach; something seems to remind me that she even got into the boat to put off to my rescue. His daughter, ah! He is a fine-looking old man, high forehead, large transparent eye, and sharply angled features;—his daughter ought to be a pretty creature. How delightful it is to contemplate anything that's beautiful! most especially when the object is a beautiful woman; and to owe them anything is so exquisite a joy, that one could wish never to be out of their debt. I wonder," but the object of the youth's debate—a debate, by the way, which youth only could so enthusiastically entertain—was here cut short by the entrance of a servant bearing the breakfast, which the old officer had promised. Accustomed to the odious fare and the horrid privations of a man-of-war, with what trebled elegance and refinement did the simplest preparations of comfort and cleanliness now strike on Prestone's eye! To his mind, a more luxurious meal had never been offered to an emperor, than the simple coffee, toast, honey, and dried fish, which were now placed by his bed-side, by the lively little soubrette that waited on him. Full of his host's daughter, the young sailor looked up into the damsel's dark-olive countenance, to see if he could there detect the transparent eye, sharp-angled features, &c. &c.; but though she appeared very pleasing, and did not seem at all to object to the scrutiny of a good-looking youngster, Prestone soon came to the conclusion that this was not the deity that already filled his mind. Conjecture now resumed her sway; a thousand countenances were formed, and fancied, and rejected, as not being suitable to the fair being to whom he owed his life; and breakfast being concluded, he threw himself back on his pillow to dream of her once more.

Brains, they say, are divided into four classes,—the nervous, the sanguineous, the melancholic, and the lymphatic:—the nervous is all work and no play; the sanguineous, less play and more work; the melancholic, is of the gloomy; and the lymphatic, of the Dutch or devil-may-care cast. Prestone's was a nice balance, a sort of nervo-sanguineo-lymphatic, a clever temperament, added to a strong body, and a lazy-luxurious disposition. There was to him no greater delight on earth, than lying dozing cat-like in a sort of rest between dreaming and waking, his mind filled with voluptuous images of the lady of his love. Giving his soul, therefore, up to this delightful enjoyment, he settled himself down, determined to revel to the utmost. He had not, however, been thus entranced for above an hour, when he heard some one remove the breakfast things, and presently in his dreams he distinguished a light gentle pit a-pat—it could scarcely be called a step—across his room; a hand, the fairest and gentlest he had almost ever seen, softly seemed to draw aside the curtain, in order that its owner might gaze down upon him. A

*The Earthly Paradise.*

feeling like that of deep awe temporarily suppressed his breath ; he tried to distinguish the fair stranger's features, but in vain ; at last, with a sudden effort, he turned his head slightly round, quickly opened his eyes, and beheld for so brief a space—it could scarcely be termed a sight—a light sylph-like figure, tall, yet of the most exquisite proportions, with a face delicate as the tints of sunrise, or the lights of day just blushing upon the mountain-tops, a profusion of dark clustering ringlets surrounding it on every side : one of those enchanting beings whose very existence we are led to doubt for the first twenty years of our lives ; to acknowledge their reality with broken hearts for the remainder ! Yes ! there indeed was the transparency—the beautifully moulded, sharp, clear features of her father.—The smile that bespoke benevolence, and the forehead radiant with intellect !—More, far more in short, than Prestone's warmest visions had conceived, was now bending over him—him !—Prestone!—with looks of the deepest interest, and mute anxious inquiries for his well-doing. Surprise for many seconds kept him motionless, and then his next impulse was to spring from his recumbent position, press those taper fingers to his lips, and pour out on them all the gratitude he so deeply felt for his deliverance. But ah ! on the very first effort which he made to carry his impulse into effect, the beautiful vision started from his side, glided in an instant across the room, and vanished !—leaving our friend in agitated debate, whether he had seen an inhabitant of earth, or whether his own too active fancy had not conjured up a spirit of a fairer but less substantial realm. Poor Prestone ! his lot seemed to be the fate of escaping from one danger to fall into another. Shipwreck, certainly, is a frightful thing,—the sea, a terrific master, and gales, and hurricanes, terrible calamities. But does not he venture on a stormier ocean who steers his bark upon the sea of love ? Is not he tossed by fiercer tempests whose sail the breath of passion fills ? And is not his ruin the most deadly, whose affections are in danger of shipwreck ?

For some time Prestone could do nothing but lie still, and repeat to himself " How beautiful ! how very beautiful ! I wish I hadn't seen her ! She must be his daughter—and yet she seems too exquisite for any mortal being. It must have been a dream ! or, if not— I'll not think of her again. What right have I to disturb my fancy with such visions ? I shall be soon at sea once more, and then, everything I have seen on shore will, thank Heaven ! be forgotten ! ——"

—A few minutes, and Prestone was asleep again ; but the fairy creature he had seen by his couch, formed the leading part and feature in every vision, let it take what aspect or device it might. At last, unable any longer to bear the excitement and suspense, he sprang up, determined to array himself, and seek out this destroyer of his peace ; to ascertain if she really was so exquisitely beautiful as he believed. As he jumped up with this resolution, and felt his weakened and exhausted limbs give way beneath him, a vague and indefinable, but yet too well-known feeling of the heart, told him how great was the danger on which he was rushing. But alas for youth and affection ! they are always ready heedlessly to throw themselves into entanglements of the

passions, at a minute's notice, from which they sometimes never escape, through life, and even those most lucky, only at the cost of years of suffering. But as this is a point which every one likes to teach himself, Prestone resembled the generality of mankind, and resolutely made up his mind to a little self-instruction. On examining into the state of his toilet, he discovered that a very slight portion of his sea-drenched dress remained in any state fit for use; but his host, with a continuation of that kindness which first made them acquainted, had taken care to supply his wants from his own wardrobe: hastily completing his attire, he softly stole down into the rooms below. Here everything at first appeared so still and silent, that he almost doubted whether the house contained any tenant but himself. It was a large old-fashioned cottage, that seemingly had known better days, from the number of apartments it contained; and after peeping into two or three, in a vain search for the being whom he sought, he was about to give up the chase in despair, and wander into the garden, when seeing the door of a small room open, opposite to him, he gently pushed the portal aside, and stole softly in: here he was soon convinced that earth really did contain a being quite as adorable and beautiful as she who had flitted through his dreams. The room was a little narrow slip of a chamber, fitted up in a style between the book-worm's studio and the lady's boudoir; while, in an old bay-window, hung a canary-bird, taking some food from the long and taper fingers of its mistress, who presently turning round, discovered the same sweet happy face that had looked upon our hero, as he lay sleeping. After many apologies for having intruded on her sanctuary, Prestone now tendered to her, with all the glowing gratitude of a noble heart, the thanks he felt for his deliverance. In this his fair listener at first denied having any share; but Prestone having quoted her father's authority, and declared, moreover, that he himself had seen her from the wreck, urging the men to embark, she disclaimed all thanks with such gentle diffidence, and true modesty, as quite completed the conquest she had already made. To sailors, cooped up as they are on board a ship, and possessed of but little opportunity for enjoying female society, any woman tolerably young or pretty, is a goddess of the first divinity; but Prestone, thus suddenly encountering a young creature, with whom the most fastidious would have been in considerable danger, at once was plunged, beyond all redemption, most irretrievably in love. Severe as had been the martyrdom through which he had passed to this island of Calypso, he felt that he could cheerfully go through all his trials a second time, to gain an equally delightful result.

Being anxious to see what had become of the remains of his old ship, —we say nothing of the transports of a *tête-à-tête*—Prestone proposed a walk to the sea-side; and on their road he learnt from his companion her father's station and employment: not far from the door they encountered the old officer in person, and they could have spared the pleasure of his company. They now proceeded together to examine the state of the wreck. On their road Prestone learnt with grief, that all his worst fears of the raft's loss were but too correct—not one livng soul had

reached the shore. By this time, not more than one or two timbers were to be seen at low tide; while the waves continued to east up the bodies of Prestone's shipmates, who, as soon as they appeared, were taken by the men under the old officer's command, and afforded the rites of burial, with as much tenderness as if they had formed part of his own crew. Our hero's next solicitude, was to ascertain how far he was liable to be considered a prisoner of war. But on this point, his host told him that it was unnecessary to give himself any concern, as he would undertake to prevent any notice being taken of his residence, until such time as he might be able to hear from his friends in England, or return to them. This was the only intelligence that was wanting to complete our friend's joy, and he secretly determined that his letter to his friends in England should not be more particularly hurried than he could possibly avoid. In the mean time the old officer, whose name was Lieutenant Tournon, continued to behave to him with the same kindness as ever; and the passion which had at first been limited to Prestone, rapidly stole—as such contagious matters frequently do— into the bosom of the fair L'Egérie. They certainly were worthy the perils of shipwreck—those moonlight walks, that constant intercourse from the hour of rising till the period of retiring to rest, and all the sweetest confidence which youth can know. It was well that Prestone snatched these joys, when the opportunity was offered to him; for Fidget, in whose constitution death and life seemed to have fought a hard struggle, now revived sufficiently to come down stairs, and being equally stricken with the daughter of his host, he also made fierce love. A very few days however sufficed to show him, that the fortress had been gained before his forces had approached; and his rage was proportionate, when he discovered that his successful rival was no other than one of his own seamen. In love and war, they say, all's fair; and no sooner did the captain make this discovery, than he took the father aside, and communicated to him the pleasing fact that the fair L'Egérie, a creature formed to grace and adorn any circle, had fallen in love with what a landsman would call "a common sailor." The old father, who was certainly no common person himself, heard this to an end, and then speaking in French, put this pithy question:—

"But, Monsieur, do I understand that you're anxious to pay your addresses yourself to Mademoiselle Tournon?"

"Why," replied Fidget, blushing, and not exactly wishing to commit himself; neither knowing, on the other hand, how positively to deny the fact, without giving offence to the hospitable person, who had not only preserved his existence, but whose table and whose roof were at that very moment given to his wants; "as I said before, any man, however high his rank, might proudly strive to boast your daughter as his wife; but it was not on that ground I spoke. I was anxious to point out to you, for your own sake, the danger in which your child now stands."

"I have a thousand thanks to offer you," said the Frenchman, with a most meaning manner. "And believe me, Monsieur, I shall ever remember the efforts you have made."

On hearing this, Fidget went off considerably delighted, and firmly

believing that the father was his friend for ever. In the interim the old officer, who had formed a strong affection for Prestone, did not by any means feel so well satisfied with the motives of his captain, to save whose life he knew, from the assertions of the one and the admissions of the other, that Prestone had run a risk of losing his own existence, which risk had been all but realized. Going, however, immediately to his daughter, like a manly and prudent person, he simply said,

"My love, I am told that you have formed an attachment to the young person who was saved from the wreck! Is that so?"

L'Egérie made no direct reply; but her father, who was too well skilled in his daughter's feelings to need any other information, at once perceived from her silence how the case stood.

"Does he know this?" said the old man, pursuing his inquiry.

"He has never asked me," said the fair girl, blushing. "Neither have I told the secret to you."

"And, therefore, you infer, love, that what your father can find out, so also can your lover?"

"Alas! my dear father, how melancholy would be our lot if the Almighty had not placed within our hearts his oracles to tell us where we really are beloved!" And L'Egerie threw her arms round her father's bosom, in a manner that bespoke her perfect confidence as to the affection treasured up for her within.

"Are you aware that this young man is a common English sailor?"

"Impossible!" said L'Egérie, starting back in the utmost surprise.

"But I assure you he is, for his captain has just told me so, and put me on my guard; indeed, drawn my observation to the fact of his paying his attentions to you."

"The ungrateful wretch! And this is his return to the young man but for whose courage he would now have been a part of that earth which, vile as it is, he disgraces by connexion with a thing so mean as himself."

"I cannot certainly say that his conduct has improved my opinion of him, because I certainly think he should have spoken first to the lad himself, which he has not done; and if that failed to produce the effect he desired, he might then have appealed to me; but, though this is my opinion of his conduct, it does not alter the necessity of our considering the facts he has communicated. I do not think the worse of the young man for his humble position, because by our service this would be no bar to his promotion; but with the English the case is different. You must conquer this attachment, my love, and the young man must leave us."

"But, my dear father," said L'Egérie, bursting into tears, "the whole is a base falsehood!—Believe me that it is, and, I am convinced, the captain's story arises from the simple fact, that I would not listen to his own addresses. Contemptible creature!"

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

### A NIGHT MARCH AND THE BATTLE-FIELD.

"THIS is the eventful dawn that decides our destiny!" exclaimed Eveline to De Passoa, as the midnight slowly waned into morning of the second day, and displayed the towers and houses of the devoted city on which they were marching. The Frenchman laid his hand on his left breast with a quiet solemnity that proclaimed far more truly than any language, the deep excitement aroused in his own bosom by the scene and occasion—though these might have impressed the most careless mortal with emotions of no ordinary kind.

The rebel army, too well acquainted with the climate to undertake a heavy action under the scorching rays of a noontide sun, had halted on the previous morning a few hours after Toussaint had given to our friends their memorable audience. Throughout the heat of the day the "troops," if they may be so called, had received orders to refresh themselves with sleep and food, while a detachment, chosen by lot; were sent out, some to forage, and others to act as spies on the enemy's camp, which, by all accounts, was formed in advance of the city to be protected, their videttes being pushed almost to the outposts of the insurgents' army: not long after sunset the latter was once more put in motion; while the gorgeous splendour of a West Indian moon at its full, lighted on the rude, but enthusiastic, masses of men, who needed no spur to their intense revenge, to undergo all hardships for that victory they were sworn and determined to gain.

Through valleys of the most enchanting form, the dark tortuous mass of the sable army wound like some vast living reptile, whose powers are magnified the more from the indistinctness that conceals it. Now the moonlight lay sleeping holily on the mountain tops, or flashed suddenly back from the tranquil mirror of the sea, as its gentle murmur fell in distant thunder, sighing deeply while its heavy waves swept back with a low lengthened roar to the parent ocean, as some sudden break in the woods allowed the eye and ear to indulge in these evidences of its proximity. Gigantic cotton-trees, and the enormous spreading mahogany, afforded objects of deep shadow; while on the dancing spray of some long slight palm, the light seemed walking by their side, reflected with all the vividness of electricity; and as the deep rolling of the sea became once more hushed while the army moved along, the night-breeze gently rose sweet with the perfume of the forest, and bearing on its bosom the wild and distant songs with which these strugglers for liberty cheered their present toil, and anticipated pleasures that should never arise for them.

At this instant the loud report of cannon came faintly to the ear; and in the distant horizon sharp quick flashes of a far ruddier colour than the pure moon's rays, announced that the skirmishing between the different outposts had begun. These sounds only the more increased

the already intense excitement felt by our friends; while shouts of joy and eager prognostications of victory arose among the undisciplined negroes.

As the troops continued to advance, all the tumult of an approaching conflict grew nearer. The low thunder of cannon was followed at no long intervals by the crashing peals of musketry. The cries of wounded men, the flying past of injured horses, whose masters had been already thrown or slain, while with impetuous fury others galloped to and fro, to bear orders and replies,—all impressed the sense with the fact of a near approach to the battle-field.

Amid these engrossing portents the sky suddenly began to lighten in the east, and presently the sun burst forth in what might most truly be termed oriental magnificence. Eveline now distinctly beheld beneath the ridge of the hill on which the rebels were marching, the city, whose capture they desired; while drawn up on the rising of the plain before it, were the French troops hastily collected for its protection; supported it is true along the whole extent of their rear by the hearths and altars for which they fought, but quite commanded by the higher position which the slaves possessed, and which the colonists had considered either too distant or too extensive to be successfully held by their limited forces.

A party of the insurgents having previously gained possession of the higher ridge, now moved forward to drive in the advanced lines of their enemy; while the main body of the rebels having passed the defile which they had been traversing during the night, and spread out into open line, advanced in this order, and thus suddenly arriving within sight both of their foe and their desired prize, halted for a few minutes, while their general determined on his line of attack.

The fierce yell of exultation that rent the skies, as the large body of the blacks first caught sight of their opponents in the plain below, made the flesh creep on Eveline's bones, and gave her a fearful intimation and but too true prophecy of all the horrors which their victorious and unrestrained licence would perpetrate. After the pause of a quarter of an hour spent in most anxious suspense, the chief of the insurgents gave the word for his troops to advance; and, accordingly, the left wing, headed by a negro of great power, rushed down upon the plain with an impetuosity which it seemed impossible for anything to withstand.

The opposite or right wing of the colonists was, however, composed of some of the most tried and veteran troops from France; men who had been seasoned in the battle-field in their own country, and even when transplanted to the unhealthy climate of St. Domingo, had resisted the attacks of its innumerable diseases and perpetual heat. Filled with an intense hatred of the blacks, and the cause for which they fought, long accustomed to tyrannize over the negroes, as well as to consider them a degraded and all but helpless species of brute, the more annoying, from its possessing the power of speech and complaint, conscious superiority, long triumph, and still greater detestation, combined with the powers of discipline to give them every advantage.

"There," cried De Passoa, touching Eveline on the shoulder, "there is something like fighting for you; see how the blacks go to it—fine

strapping fellows! But French shot shall soon take the pride out of them."

"It will indeed. See, they begin to fall already. How firmly the enemy's right wing stands! Why don't they open fire on 'em?"

"Some old experienced soldier was commanding there, depend on it. Never fire till you will see the whites of your enemy's eyes. See now they open."

"And there fall the unfortunate negroes right and left. What a horrible sight it is to contemplate a battle field and all the outrageous fury of a combat, unstimulated in the slightest degree by the fierce struggle of personal encounter! See, see, how the negroes are falling now in whole lines together. What is this better than the coolest butchery?"

"Butchery! not at all. This was just as it should be," cried De Passoa, rubbing his hands with glee, while his eyes sparkled intensely in the growing light of morning. "Go it, Old France."

"Hush, for Heaven's sake, De Passoa; remember that you are in the midst of those who hate France and all that belongs to her; have a care of what you say."

"True, my good young friend, I shall thank you for the caution;" then whispering closely, "These damned niggers shall be thrashed in one hand gallop yet."

"See, there they run! Heaven save them!" cried Eveline, "the cause of liberty in every clime against all tyrants. Here, Spanker! Simpson! who'll charge with me to the rescue?"

Had the issue of that day's fight depended only on the assistance which these few with willing hands could render, Tyranny at least would have won no victory over the advancement of mankind. Toussaint L'Ouverture had, however, been busily engaged in watching the progress of the fight, and while to all appearance he had been coolly regarding the slaughter of his men, he was in reality applauding the determination with which they returned again and again to the charge, utterly regardless of life or limb provided that they conquered. In order to insure this, Toussaint had moreover sent a detachment of bush-rangers round the end of the plain through a kind of jungle, with instructions to take the enemy's right wing in the flank, and thus endeavour to rout it; while to support the men he had already pushed forward, he determined to hazard all upon a single die, and moved down into the plain with his whole line to join battle. Before Eveline with her friends, Spanker and Simpson, who readily rushed to her side on hearing her summons, could perfect the act of madness which, like raw soldiers as they were, would have led them to rush from their own ranks on certain death, they found themselves surrounded and protected by the whole body of negroes, who with a thousand hideous yells and exultations bore furiously forward to the fight, rushing down the hill-side less like a body of troops advancing to attack disciplined forces than the wild herd of swine possessed by devils in Holy Writ rushing from destruction. Now appeared too in all their horror the endless variety of the rebels' arms; knives, daggers, swords, scythe-blades and bludgeons ingeniously studded with

nails or broken fragments of iron, to aid in the work of slaughter; while at their head on foot strode the powerful Toussaint, urging on his people alike by his speech and example; the sash on his waist being already streaked with the ensanguined stream that flowed around, and his large dark eyes starting from beneath the grey bushy eyebrows that surmounted them.

"Our liberty is lost for ever, or cemented now" cried the daring chieftain in the French language. "Come on, come on—Death itself is a release from slavery—God is with us—on!"

With these and similar cries, Toussaint advanced to the very faces of his enemies; but while yet his sword was raised in act to strike, a bullet hit the blade and broke it into a thousand atoms, while the foe raised the triumphant shout—"They run, they run!"

"Take back your lie and give me back a sword!" was the reply of the intrepid Toussaint, who without looking behind, dashed on the fellow to whom he owed his loss, seized with the utmost rapidity his firelock from the fellow's hand, dashed out its owner's brains with the butt, and then discharging the contents of the barrel into the bosom of an officer who was rushing to the man's assistance, snatched away the latter's sword, and waving it above his head, cried to his men, "Do the same each of you, and the day is ours."

"Hurrah," cried the negroes, catching fresh hope and vigour from the deed.

"Here come in the bush-rangers," exclaimed one of Toussaint's *aides-de-camp*, as the men despatched to turn the flank of the enemy's right, now poured in a galling fire from detached posts, whence they could not be driven, while part of them charged in person on the point assailed. At this critical juncture, some craven-hearted creature, either betraying the side for which he appeared to strive, or betrayed by his own fears, suddenly raised the cry, "We are surrounded."

Not more swiftly does fire extend along the open brow of some parched common, where the withered gorse-bush droops a ready prey for the flames, than did this sudden panic extend throughout the lines of the colonists' troops. The very men who had been but a few minutes before, to all appearance, strong in the assurance of victory, now imagined themselves to be caught in some artful toil; and hearing the cries of the negroes in their rear, and seeing their companions falling from a line of fire on their flank, concluded that some large unknown force was there concealed. Thus impressed, they first halted, then wavered, and as the negroes became more encouraged, finally fled. In vain the French leader with his own hand cut down one of the fugitives, and endeavoured by every species of imprecation and entreaty to arrest their flight. His words no longer seemed to have the least authority with any of the soldiers who listened to them. The first moment that gave to the rebels the least advantage, rudely dispelled the prestige of superiority which had hitherto afforded them so much moral strength against superior numbers: this gone, the immense personal power of their enemies, the ferocious-looking appearance they brought with them into action, the relentless cruelty with which

they massacred all who fell, their hideous cries, their numerous arms and naked bodies, all contributed to increase the effect which a momentary terror had produced. Rudely pressing against their commander, his horse was thrown to the field by the shock of his troops in their precipitate flight. Before the unfortunate beast could regain its legs, a swarm of dead and living bodies covered it, while the rider still uttering imprecations on their cowardice, was trampled into silence and insensibility by the iron heels of his own soldiery. It wanted but this to enable the negroes to carry all before them. A flotilla of boats about this period anchored in the bay, on the right wing of the colonists' army, which they had been instructed, but which they had neglected, to support. Seeing how matters were going, they opened fire to the best of their abilities; but in the confusion of the moment, their shots either buried themselves harmlessly in the ground, or killed as many friends as foes; while, as the colonists were in full flight into the city, and the negroes in as full pursuit of them, the whole squadron were obliged rapidly to unmoor to seek safety for themselves, in consequence of the appearance of an English squadron, that under a press of sail came doubling round the neighbouring promontory.

Surrounded by his staff, Toussaint, as soon as the battle was fairly won, gathered together by a great effort such few of the older negroes as yet retained any sense of discipline. With these men, Toussaint endeavoured to spare the lives of such of the enemy on the field as had not already fallen; and having in several cases effected this humane purpose, he next entered the city in which the great majority of his troops were rioting, with the humane desire of moderating by his presence those outrages he could not altogether prevent, as well as of affording to all who should need them whatever powers of protection he still possessed. In the mean while, Eveline, Simpson, and Spanker, had been borne onward like mere feathers on the crest of some large wave towards the very thick of the battle.

Having fortunately escaped any severe wounds, they now espied Toussaint, and joining his staff, they all entered the city, where the pandemonium of cries, shrieks, and musket-shots, with every other sound of horrid confusion, grew more and more intense every moment.

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## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

### REVERTS TO THE FORTUNES OF ALIBI AND BAMBOOZLE.

The progress of our story demands that we should now, for a brief space, revert to the fate of some of our other characters; and as the one leads into the rest, we will take up that of Dr. Bamboozle.

Hard as the task was, the doctor succeeded in pulling off to the schooner and boarding her, when he found on deck the worthy individual who had refused to render his assistance by going on shore. Knowing full well that nothing could be done while this man remained

on deck, our friend determined to have recourse to his old trick, and by pretending that he very much wished the benefit of the malcontent's society, thus drive the latter once more down below. The other also seemed inclined to fall very readily into the trap set for him, since he no sooner perceived Bamboozle coming, than holding out his hand as much as to say "Avaunt thee, Satan!" he exclaimed—

"I tell ye it's no use, I won't go on shore on any of your devil's errands, and so it's no use to ask me."

"Well, but I say you must and shall come on shore, so it's no use refusing," retorted old Bam, chuckling inwardly with prodigious delight at the humour in which he found the other. "The fact is, the blacks are in a state of rebellion ashore yonder; there's no safety among them; would you see Mr. Paul and myself murdered before your eyes, for want of your helping, when just stepping into the boat and putting a bold front on the matter would set all right? three, you know, might face—"

"—De'il a face ye get from me, unless it's hacked from my shoulthers: I wonder ye ha' the face to say a word about it; I tell ye I won't come, nor have any living matter to do wi' either of you, but I'll just go below and speak no word more,"—and down below dived the generous individual.

"But Mac! Mac!" shouted old Bam, scarcely able to do his manœuvre justice from excess of laughter. No word in answer, however, would Mac deign to give, and Bamboozle at length, convinced that no danger was to be apprehended from that quarter, turned round and proceeded down the companion hatchway.

"What the devil's brought you back?" growled Alibi, as the other set his foot on the first stair. Bamboozle muttered an oath of disappointment.

"I've only forgotten something, Alibi," returned he, not very warily giving an evasive answer.

"Forgotten what—Forgotten! the devil forgotten I say! It must be a precious piece of forgetfulness to bring you all this way back to the schooner! What is it?

"O! O! ahem! that is—what did you say?"

"I say what is it you have forgotten, to bring you all this distance?"

"Why, my lancet-case I tell you. How often must I bawl a short answer like that in your ear before you can understand it? My lancets want grinding so bad, I thought my last patient might have died from inflammation of the veins, the lancet was so rusty. The French, you know, are just the boys for doing that sort of thing right well, so I thought I'd give 'em a trial—I shan't be long."

"You may be as long as you like," said Alibi in his usual bearish manner, and turning round in his cot as if going to sleep. Bamboozle, quite assured that all was right, walked boldly to his cabin, whistling some ballad, and after a few minutes spent in pretending to ransack his chest, and sundry exclamations, half aloud, half to himself, of "Well, I'm sure I put them here—I remember the day—yes, they must be here—No!— where the devil can they be? sure they couldn't

have been left in the cabin that day when I bled the cook ?—though I do believe they must have been," together with further passages of dialogue filling up the pauses, Bamboozle walked into the captain's cabin as if to search for his missing lancets, opened the door which secured the gold, with the most excessive agitation and excitement, clasped the weighty hoard, and heavy though it was, lifted it like a feather, and placed it underneath his coat in front, the breast bulging out over the treasure like the distended plumage of some old carrion crow over his crop, when gorged beyond all decency. "Darling angels," muttered old Bam, as he hugged the aureant coins still closer to his bosom with one arm, while he extended the other to close the cupboard door. This duty accomplished, he had now nothing more to effect but his retreat, and turning swiftly round—

Jack Alibi stood full before him !

Now Jack never was a pleasant-looking being. What then must the unfortunate Bamboozle have thought of Alibi's appearance, when that enormous original stood before him—naked from his cot; his hair matted and hanging over his face in wildest confusion; his eye bloodshot from long sleep and present fury; his lips swollen and his tongue half protruding from his mouth, and not only his head, but all the features in it, were distended to twice their natural size, by the excessive effects of the quicksilver; while added to this, the most deadly rage threw its grim and distorting effects over his whole person, and his beard, which had not been shaved for a week, blackened around his infuriate muzzle with the deadliest aspect! Such seemed Alibi's unutterable anger and surprise, that many seconds elapsed before he could command himself enough to articulate. In this interval, the whole desperate condition of his present plight so completely revealed itself to Bamboozle, that his treacherous claws even forsook their duty, and down fell on the deck, with a sound as dead as his own doom, the bag of glittering bait that had lured him to this extremity.

"How long have you used those golden lancets, you infernal thief of perdition ?" demanded Alibi, in a voice scarcely human, as soon as he recovered the power of speech. In vain Bamboozle endeavoured to coax up a reply from the bottom of his throat, the words were frozen there. He got as far as "I—I—I," and then the heavy fist of Alibi finished the rest of the sentence by the most forcible of all arguments, which the learned have termed the *argumentum bacculinum*, and the unlearned "the knock-down."

"I hope that's finished you! You thrice-dyed incarnation of lies and rhubarb!" proceeded Alibi, speaking in his wrath as loudly as if the words could still annoy the bleeding ear of poor old Bam, who lay as flat upon the deck as if he never should rise more. "I dare say the blackguard has taken the other bag already;" then looking, and at once perceiving the loss he had sustained, "Well, if he hasn't, blow my eyes and limbs into every quarter of the globe, but where I want them!" with many other equally elegant and certainly quite as useful exclamations, Alibi took a spyglass, opened one of the scuttles, and directing his disabled vision to the shore, there beheld poor

Paul waiting disconsolately for the boat. At this sight all the worthy pirate's rage seemed to find fresh fury and double vent. "Yes, there he stands—there—there—for the return of the boat; if he doesn't, may my mother never wop her blessed cat for cream-stealing—and my gold beside him all the while, I'll lay my life. If Bamboozle has any brains left, when he gets up, hang me but I'll beat them out into a pap-boat, and give them to my dog as sauce with his indigestible liver. And to think of being done by that Paul, the young cheat-the-gallows! Honesty's come to a pretty pass, when you can't save a boy from hanging, but he must rob you of the gold you got for doing it; ay, and more too, that's the worst of it, may I be smothered if 'tisn't a temptation to turn to some honest calling, just to prosecute that young hypocrite for the theft, and give the gallows its due. So smooth as he is, and yet to rob a man he owes all to, and has seen work so hard too for his money! Hang me if ever I believe in any man's truth again."

Going on deck and calling to the Scotchman, the latter, after some consultation, agreed with Alibi as to the necessity of an immediate departure; and partly with a view of making use of his pair of hands, and partly with the amiable intent of exposing him to the French shot, if any should be fired, Bamboozle was pulled up the hatchway, more dead than alive. As Paul had seen, old Bam was here made, by dint of threats and cuffs, to render what little assistance lay in his power towards getting the schooner under weigh; and then, as soon as she had passed the French man-of-war, and got fairly out to sea without being fired on, he was told to prepare for death. The scene that here ensued was one in every way painful to humanity to witness; it was painful to see the wretched Bamboozle, utterly forgetting everything that science or philosophy had taught him, and craving his life with the most obsequious submission, from the hands of one who could scarcely be called a human creature. Alibi was at first, however, inexorable; he told the doctor, with a manner that too sadly enforced belief, to prepare for death in thirty minutes; which death Alibi added, by way of comfort, should be inflicted by beating his head in with the bag of gold he had attempted to steal. When at length Bamboozle saw that neither contrition, entreaty, lying, nor even the most obsequious submission could avail in softening Jack's brutality, he luckily thought of attacking the enemy through that never-failing quarter self-interest. Springing from his knees, with a ludicrous air of pettishness, that seemed almost to warrant the supposition of his having been only feigning beforehand, he exclaimed—

"I tell you what it is, Mr. Jack Alibi, knock my brains out as soon as you will. If you kill me, you won't live long yourself, that's one comfort; but that you must know, yourself, as well as I do; and if you doubt it, you have only to go and look at yourself in the glass."

"Go below, you lying old hypocrite, or I'll toss you overboard from where I stand," replied Jack, somewhat staggered at the intimation he had just received; while the other, seeing that his words had not altogether lost their effect, obeyed the command, and sulkily retreated to his cabin. Here, however, instead of preparing himself for death, he took

every precaution by barring and bolting the door of his cabin, to resist all intrusion as long as wood and iron could stand. Scarcely had he quitted the deck when Alibi desired the Scotchman to fetch out from his cabin the looking-glass that hung over his desk; and this being done, Alibi commenced examining into the truth of Bamboozle's last assertion.

Again and again he swore to himself that he certainly would knock Bamboozle's brains out, and that nobody should prevent him; but as often as he said this, he took up the tormenting looking-glass, and thought he perceived death written in every line of the most frightful features he had ever beheld in his life, for not all his partiality could conceal this fact from his own observance: then again Bamboozle might be playing with him; and yet, if so, what could make him look so hideous? "I was once upon a time," muttered Jack, "a tolerably good-looking young fellow:" then he longed for some one to whom to communicate his cares in order that he might be consoled; and after resisting this inclination for many minutes, he could no longer endure the struggle, but going up to the Scotchman abruptly, began with—

"I say, Mac, do you see anything particular in my face?"

Now Mac as a Scotchman, who was very conscientious, and always read good books, whenever an opportunity offered, because, as he said, the sin as he did oftentimes "required to be thus purified." Moreover, with this worthy man it was a leading rule of life, which cannot be too highly applauded, that nothing ever should induce him to tell a lie, unless he could most clearly perceive how it was to benefit him. Now in this case Mac could not see how it was to benefit him: or what was still more puzzling to Mac's mind and principles was, that though he doubted not a beneficial lie might be told somewhere, he could not yet perceive exactly where the lie beneficial might lay; he therefore thought it better, under all the difficulties of the case, to steer a middling course, which he conceived himself to do by very agreeably shaking his head: but your very prudent people are often getting into scrapes, from which their less thoughtful neighbours go free,—so in this instance it happened that not the most direct assertion he could have made, would have scared his captain half as much as the simple motion of the Presbyterian.

"D—n me, sir, do you think I am dying?" demanded the pirate, with as much fury as Henry the Eighth could have shown. The Scotchman now perceiving which way the wind blew, trimmed his sails by it so vividly, that Alibi, seeing through his motive, grew still further alarmed, turned a deaf ear to all his consolation, and began to number his hours. Then came the question, should Bamboozle live or not for a quarter of an hour? Alibi chewed the cud on this eventful point for some time wholly undecided. Finding himself, however, rapidly growing worse, and the pains in his limbs and head becoming almost insupportable, he resolved in his own mind to make use of Bamboozle's professional abilities so long as he lived, and to leave orders for the doctor's immediate destruction in case of his own demise. Having communicated these his resolves to the scrupulous Scotchman, who, hearing the whole, took care to compromise himself to

no definite answer, and yet to leave Alibi perfectly convinced of his intended obedience, Mac was now sent down to summon Bamboozle to the deck. The doctor had, however, completed his arrangements for defence. Strapped round his person were some of the sharpest instruments he had left on board; for in addition to his misfortunes, our readers will remember that he had carried to the shore most of his valuables; an old amputating knife, of the French description, with a pointed blade, a most fearful weapon to encounter, together with another of the same description, though both considerably past surgical use, still remained behind,—and these he had appended to his person by a silk handkerchief, tied round the waist; two formidable bottles full of mineral acid stood at hand, with their stoppers out and their contents smoking like small steam engines, ready to be dashed in the face of any rude assailant; while in addition to these defensive and offensive preparations, a large pair of ship's pistols, cocked and loaded, lay on the doctor's cot,—the lid of his chest, his mattress, and, in short, everything that could be tortured into a barricade, were ingeniously bolstered up against the door, as well to resist its being forced open, as to prevent bullets being fired through; from within this strong-hold the doctor parleyed with the Scotchman, and on being told that Alibi wanted him on the quarter-deck, positively and resolutely refused to obey the summons, under any pretence whatsoever. In vain Mac assured him that no harm was meant, that Gentle Jack had only desired his medical advice, and so forth. The doctor vowed by every particle of the fame of Celsus, that no patient, be his rank what it might, should induce him to come out of his cabin that night; nothing but burning him out, blowing him up, or sinking the ship, should move him; he was fully armed and prepared for a siege; and if they took him, they should never take him alive.

"Ye old fool!" said the angry Scotchman, "d'ye think I'd trouble myself to tell you a lee?" and the northern attempted to force Bamboozle's door. With a degree of celerity that could hardly be expected, Bamboozle dipped a syringe into the bottle of nitrous acid, and having drawn up the piston, discharged its contents full on the Scotchman's boney hand; while the latter, at first thinking it was only water, exclaimed in a jeering manner, "What child's play are ye after now?" then in a second feeling the intense agony the liquid inflicted, immediately dropped the lock of Bamboozle's door, and dancing round the deck with pain, cried, "Deil tak the fellow! What is it? How it burns!"

"No child's play that, Master Mac," retorted Bamboozle, grinning heartily as he watched the other's sufferings through a crack in the panel. "Don't be calling names, and swearing in that way; but think yourself very lucky I didn't aim that at your eye: you wouldn't have seen double again, in a hurry, I warrant you. Now, go on deck, and tell Alibi if he wants to consult me about his health, he must come to me, not send for me to him: and what's more, tell him to keep his distance. A mad dog is a safer animal, any day, than a desperate doctor." With this message Mac returned to the quarter-deck, and Alibi being

infinitely amused at the sufferings of the Scotchman, was fain to accede to Bamboozle's terms, and seek his advice, with a barricaded door between them. The leech having told him to go to bed, promised to make some pills for him, and let them roll through the space under the door-way; while Alibi, assuring him that he had left orders that the surgeon should not outlive his patient, expressed his readiness to take whatever was prescribed, and then sought his hammock. Bamboozle, as he made up the medicine for his unruly patient, took up the bottle of arsenic, looked at it wistfully, shook his head, and then put it in its place again; made up the proper medicine, rolled it under the door-way, and listened to Alibi while he swallowed it.

Contrary to Bamboozle's expectation, the following morning found the pirate much better; no cold came on, as might have been anticipated from his sudden exposure to the open air, and in a few days Alibi seemed to have got beyond any relapse of his illness; with the exception that two or three of the crew who had chosen to remain below, the rest of the seamen made what the sailors term a hurricane-house upon deck, and by living there, gradually recovered from the effects of the deadly mineral, by which they had been poisoned. By degrees Bamboozle became convinced that his life was to be spared, and so gradually emerged from his den. The pirates cruised with indifferent success till they fell in with the vessel containing Sir Job Periwinkle, and played the worthy Briton the detestable trick already recorded. What with jewels, coin, the quicksilver, various articles of merchandise, and the bills they had extracted from Sir Job, Alibi imagined that he had now procured nearly enough plunder to abandon piracy for the more secure occupation of living on its produce; for the completion of this scheme he more particularly experienced the want of some friendly port, where the refinements of civilization would enable him to realize in hard cash, with the least possible loss, the various prizes he had made. Any colony belonging to England was, of course, wholly out of the question; nor was it easy, from the number of cruisers, to get safe into any large port with which the English were at war; neither, on the other hand, would any small settlement have presented the facilities Alibi desired to meet under these circumstances: the ease with which he at first entered and escaped from the harbour of St. Domingo; the knowledge which he had obtained of the various commotions by which the French authorities at that time were distracted; its large population and great commercial intercourse,—all indicated it as a proper and very desirable point on which to base the realizing part of his operations. Resolving to use the utmost possible circumspection, he now sailed for that island. On his road thither he gave chase to what he considered to be a prize, but which proved, in reality, to be a brother-labourer in the same vineyard of iniquity: having spoken this vessel, and received on board some of her crew, to supply the places of those who had died, four sturdy villains of various nations came on board the schooner, and at their head no less a person than the redoubted Envee; obliged to run from the service from a report of his having been involved in the outrage on the Irish vicarage, he had thought fit to follow the long-felt

inclinations of his own heart, and sail to the West Indies in a sloop which he knew was to join Alibi. Warm was the greeting which took place between these worthy compeers, and after a long carousal some of the invalid seamen were exchanged from Alibi's ship into the other, and fresh hands received in their stead, after which either vessel stood away to fulfil her own object. Nothing adverse having occurred, Alibi's schooner at length made the port she desired, and got ready to come to an anchor; but as she had hoisted French colours, and it was necessary to sustain the character, the gentle Jack, who had not yet been able to accomplish much in the French language, and certainly looked as unlike a devourer of soupe-maigre as could well be imagined, was sent below, together with several of the most English-looking of the crew, while Envee, who had made it his study to pick up every kind of knowledge that would give effect to roguery, took command of the craft, and prepared to answer any hail to which he might be subjected. Greatly, however, to his delight, a line-of-battle ship getting under weigh was the only French man-of-war to be seen; while she, apparently too busy to regard the interests of any but herself, took no notice of the privateer schooner, but allowed the latter quietly to proceed to her anchorage near the town. The order had been already given to see the cable all clear, and in a few more minutes the pirate's anchor would have been let go, when Envee's attention happened to be attracted by the sound of a gun, discharged from the French line-of-battle ship. With all the vigilance of guilt, he immediately looked up and perceived a signal flying from her main-topgallant-mast-head. Fearful that this might be intended for himself, and utterly ignorant how to answer it, he eagerly looked round to ascertain whether it could apply to any other vessel: in an instant he beheld a man-of-war's boat answer the signal, and while this set his mind at rest with respect to himself, it left him more at liberty to examine into the characters and purposes of the party whom the boat contained; in particular his eye was directed towards a lady who sat closely veiled in the stern-sheets, and who, less from her appearance than the disguise and mystery which seemed to envelop it, drew down the misfortune of his most especial scrutiny. We need hardly tell our readers that this lady was no other than our heroine—Nora.

It will be remembered that when the French man-of-war's signal was seen and answered by her boat, the latter was all but hidden from sight by a projecting promontory, while the unfortunate Nora thus suddenly found that liberty was brought almost within her grasp only to be the more cruelly snatched from her enjoyment. With a natural effort to secure her own safety, she endeavoured by every argument and promise in her power to persuade the seamen to land her first, and then return. Again and again she assured them that the signal could not relate to her; that it must regard some other matter totally distinct; and that, in fact, to turn back when now so near the shore, was, in reality, to give themselves the trouble of returning to accomplish that which the least delay would now effect, and by this negligence bring on themselves the reprimand of the commander. Unfortunately she

pleaded so energetically, that the young officer in command of the boat, struck with the silent apathy of "*the first scholar*," thought the voice wondrously musical for the fat Englishwoman, who had so long been the subject of merriment in their mess-place; while the second gun from the line-of-battle ship at this moment sounding on his ear, he reluctantly ordered the steersman to put down the helm and turn back. Nora, carried away by her feelings, still more energetically implored to be set free; while, as if she had not already sufficiently forgotten her disguise, the alteration in the boat's position caused a momentary flaw of wind to blow aside the neglected veil, and thus, in an instant, to all eyes the imposition was discovered.

"Bless my soul, my love, who would have thought that this was you!" exclaimed "the first scholar," with that unlucky predisposition to blunder which has distinguished so many otherwise illustrious people, while a shout of laughter from both officer and men convinced Nora that her last hope was gone, and in another instant she sank senseless in the stern-sheets of the boat. As far as her own individual feelings were concerned, perhaps this was the most merciful provision for her comfort that could well have arisen. At the very moment that this scene of entreaty was proceeding in the boat, Envee, who in his schooner had gained within a few yards of the spot, had his gaze intently fixed upon Nora's person. Something in her attitudes—the proud carriage of her arched neck—the graceful movement with which she clasped her hands in wild entreaty to the young man who sat beside her, all awoke a dim remembrance that its wild improbability alone forbade to be received, even while the utmost hopes of his soul desired its realization. No sooner, however, did the unkind breeze toss by the veil and give those pale but exquisite and eloquent features to his view, than despite of every precaution the words burst from Envee's lips.

"'Tis her, by Jove."

Never yet was stimulant invented by man's misdirected ingenuity one half so powerful in doubling the pulses of the heart, as that brief glance.

"She's mine at last," muttered Envee in continuation of his thoughts, and wholly unconscious that he was giving utterance to the secrets of his odious heart.

The eager desire of grasping the prey thus unexpectedly brought within his reach, and in a quarter of the globe where he had least expected to behold her, even if ever again, threw Envee into such a perturbation of spirits, that for a few seconds he hardly knew what he was doing. Indeed, nothing less than this could explain the atrocity of which he was guilty, since with the momentary conception of a madman, he determined at all hazards to capture Nora, even though he should have to brave the fury of the seventy-four.

The briefest consideration should and would have shown him the folly of such an enterprise; but he was transported beyond either reason or humanity, though not left without that degree of cunning which gave force to his atrocity. A kind of lightning argument

seemed to flash before him, that to seize the boat as well as Nora would be ruin; and with a mind that hesitated at no depth of guilt, he instantly resolved to run the boat down, drown all her crew except Nora, for whose safety his own arm should be responsible—pretend that the result was the effect of unavoidable accident, and claim at our heroine's hands the gratitude due to a man who had saved her life at the risk of his own. Even had he wished it, not an instant was left for the reconsideration of this villany: now was the moment—the boat was already beginning to pull across his bows, and if this chance were lost, no such second ever could occur—the helm was in his own hands. Putting down a little to port, as if he were desirous of luffing up to the utmost possible extent, so as to entice the boat still more securely to pursue its path across his bows, he no sooner watched his prey advance to that point where retreat or progression was equally destructive, than reverting the helm with instant rapidity, he directed the bow of the schooner full on the gunwale of the French man-of-war's gig: the crew and officers, all busily employed in listening to Nora's intreaties, little expected this disastrous encounter, nor were even aware of their proximity to the schooner, until roused by the cry of Envee vociferating with every apparent rage and surprise, "Back astern." Starting to their oars which they had before been but slowly pulling, half in hopes that the young French officer would yet grant Nora's prayer, and set her on shore, they now became so paralysed from fear and the suddenness of the occasion, as to be wholly unable to take any course together; and while some cried out to back astern, the officer roared "Pull for your lives." The necessary consequence ensued; part followed one instruction, and part the other, until the boat becoming stationary, on came the schooner under full press of canvas, her bowsprit shooting over the heads of the devoted crew, and her huge cutwater crushing in the frail gunwale, and burying in the swell of water that she carried before her bows, every living creature that the boat contained.

"Why the devil didn't you get out of the way?" cried the atrocious scoundrel, who had caused this wholesale murder, rushing forward at the moment of collision, and shaking his spy-glass at the seamen already struggling in the embrace of death, as if the whole affair had been to him a cause of the most complete astonishment and sorrow.

In thus doing, however, his chief object had been to ascertain the position and secure the safety of Nora; but so instantaneous had been the destruction of the boat on coming in contact with the schooner, that to the horror of the wretch himself, he was unable to discover a single particle, even of her dress. Fully believing that she had been drawn under the bows of the schooner, and was, or would be, drowned, if not immediately rescued, he called immediately to his crew to lower a boat, and rushing aft to the stern, watched for Nora's re-appearance. In the mean while it had so happened that Nora and Archdeacon Pontifex, being seated in the stern of the gig, they all three were carried by the eddy of the water under the lee-bow of the pirate, and so along her side in comparative safety; while the French midshipman,

quickly recovering those senses which the suddenness of the catastrophe had briefly stunned, snatched at an oar floating by, and placing Nora's hands upon its substantial support, generously seized the next passer-by, who proved to be the first scholar in Europe; and then he himself joining the unfortunate couple, and placing himself at Nora's side, the better to watch over her safety, thus waited for the schooner to pick them all up, and so far atone for that which he conceived to be the unavoidable accident of her steersman.

In the mean time, however, Nora's bonnet and shawl had been rudely torn from her person by one of the bowsprit shrouds, and carried by the wind, fell some yards farther aft than their owner, they thus making their appearance under the stern a few seconds before herself. Envee, excited by fear and hope beyond the power of very distinctly recognising anything, had stripped off his jacket and shoes in preparation for Nora's rescue. On the instant that he beheld those parts of her dress which we have named, he plunged down after them; and sinking deep into the water by their side, Nora and the other two were floated past the spot where he had sunk ere he reappeared; while the oar and the shoulders of the swimmers being acted on by the wind, drove them considerably to leeward before Envee had dashed the water from his eyes, and sufficiently recovered from the shock, to discern objects around him; when he did so, he perceived three heads floating at a little distance; but as none of the faces were towards him, it was impossible to say whose or what they were, and, therefore, clasping the bonnet and shawl, in the vain hope of finding Nora's form beneath them, he once more dived below to recover the body which he conceived the hull of the schooner had tended to bury, in passing over it. By this time the crew of the pirate, accustomed to act with alacrity, and certain from the manner of Envee that the whole affair must have been the result of accident, had swiftly lowered down the boat hanging at their stern; and unable in the confusion to see which of the human heads around was that of their comrade, they naturally enough pulled for the three whom they saw clinging to an oar, and whom they knew they could save.

Without much ceremony either being sought or rendered, Nora, the Archdeacon, and the young Frenchman, were one after the other rapidly drawn into the boat; while the last of the three underwent a narrow escape that made his blood curdle whenever in after-life he chanced to remember it. A shoal of sharks, in all probability detained by banquetting on the bodies of the men who had sunk, appeared to have seen the dark figures floating on the surface of the water, and made towards them just in sufficient time to miss the midshipman as he was dragged on board—the ferocious creatures, rushing against the oar as it protruded from the boat, and darkening for an instant with their fins the spot from which Nora had been rescued. With that thorough detestation of this animal which all sailors possess, the pirates seized a boat-hook, and struck at the snout of the nearest fish, but in an instant they were gone! A frightful scream, or rather shriek, of agony succeeded, and presently Envee's voice was heard crying in tones of the most har-

rowing import,—"Help ! help !" Throwing aside every other consideration, the pirates gave two or three rapid strokes in the direction whence the cry came, and shot swiftly over a patch of sea covered with blood, and dyed to the extent of many yards around, with a bright crimson stain contrasting horridly against the clear transparent blue in every other part of the water. In the midst of this frightful circle, they perceived Envee swimming in his shirt-sleeves, which shone ruddily through the water the most fearful expression of agony visible in his features and apprehension, his hair standing erect upon his head with horror, while he continued crying out momentarily,—"Save me ! save me!"

It needed no further explanation to tell the story of Envee's punishment. Though not particularly attached to his person, the pirates had too acute a feeling for the horrors of his position not to render the most effective assistance in their power. While the French midshipman threw himself on the opposite side of the boat to prevent its capsizing, the others laid a hand one on each collar of Envee's shirt and waistcoat, and thus by main force dragged him from the water.

The sight that his person now presented was horrible in the extreme: both legs had been bitten off by the sharks—one just above the knee, and the other at the ancle ; while on the latter the marks of the bloodthirsty creature's teeth were seen extending the whole way down the calf of the leg, where an attempt had been made to drag it off. That under these circumstances it should be possible to rescue a being so frightfully maimed from their very jaws, may seem incredible to those who are unacquainted with the habits and nature of this fish ; but with all its ravenous habits, nothing can be more timid than its nature ; and only the most desperate hunger will drive it to attack a body in motion. The act, therefore, of swimming had kept them off to a certain degree ; and the attacks they had made, had doubtless been at some moment when Envee's limbs had been in temporary repose, and obscured by the blood which his wounds had diffused around him, they were waiting for a favourable moment to finish their morsel.

As the pirates rowed back to the schooner, similar patches in various directions clearly proved, that many other victims had gone to gorge these vultures of the deep. Having succeeded in getting on board the vessel with the four, whose lives they had saved, and being unable to detect any other sufferers floating on the waves, the pirates dropped anchor under the command of Alibi, who hearing the rout, had found the necessity of coming on deck and resuming his post ; while Bamboozle, in great amazement, discovered among his four new patients an old friend. By dint of brandy and chafing, Nora returned to her senses sufficiently to feel the bitterest grief a mother can sustain the loss of her child, which dashed from her arms at the first shock, had been instantly drowned, though happily then she was too insensible to know it. Having locked herself within the cabin of Bamboozle, which he gave up to her use, she hastily wrapped herself in a dry blanket, and threw herself down on Bamboozle's cot, thoroughly heart-broken at the apparently interminable succession of sorrows presented to her. As for

the wounds of Envee, the manner in which they had been inflicted, soon caused the hæmorrhage to cease; and Bamboozle having no instruments left on board proper for amputation, applied temporary tourniquets till such time as better assistance could be rendered. In the interim the French commander's spy-glass had been most vigilantly directed towards the schooner; and by this means undeniable evidence was afforded to him of the wanton outrage committed on his boat by the pirates. To all the fury which he felt as a man-of-war's man at thus seeing the king's pendant outraged by what he took for a mere privateer's-man, every emotion of jealousy on Nora's behalf was put in action to give unneeded acrimony. The seventy-four's barge was at this time waiting alongside to be hoisted in previous to her going to sea. In a moment of passion, the commander ordered the crew to be piped away, fully armed; and jumping into her himself, with a couple of his lieutenants, he dashed away in a state of furious revenge for the schooner.

Now as Alibi had been below at the time of the original accident, and not only was in perfect ignorance as to its cause, but did not even know to whom the boat belonged, he, imagining that he had done an unusually hospitable thing in giving the least assistance to the half-drowned passengers, had proceeded very busily intent on furling the sails of the schooner and putting her in proper order. Never thinking that its mission could be directed to him, he saw the man-of-war's barge pulling into the bay towards the town, and imagining that its destination was the shore, took no further notice of the fact. A sudden cry from one of his men aloft was the first notice he received of any danger, and then directing his attention to the object pointed out, he perceived a dozen soldiers sitting in the stern-sheets of the barge, their arms and accoutrements glittering in the sun.

Though wholly unable to guess at the object of this visit, of one thing he felt quite certain, namely, "that it boded him no good," to use his own language; the effect, therefore, that this sudden and unwelcome sight produced on the gentle Jack, was to make him put to his lips the silver whistle that hung at his breast, and pipe all hands to repel boarders. Had Alibi been certain that the barge belonged to the seventy-four, he might perhaps have hesitated before involving himself with a power it was so hopeless to resist. But, happily for mankind, it is the misfortune of guilt, that the mask of innocence must fall from her face at some point, however small. The confusion of the moment—the conviction that the barge was coming to search, on some previous information—the fear that his schooner had been descried and recognised as a pirate—and the perfect knowledge that any inquiry into his papers must end in the discovery of his real character, together with his own utter inability to play the Frenchman with any chance of success, all tended to drive him into the most hopeless course he could possibly have adopted. Accustomed, at the peril of their own lives, to obey the pipe to quarters with lightning speed, the sound had scarcely left the lips of Alibi, when his rigging was swarming with a band of desperadoes, armed to the teeth, and bristling with daggers, pistols,

swords, and muskets, as if they had been the mere feathers in which these birds were born.

"Upon my soul this is pretty!" exclaimed the French commander, who, habituated to carry all before him, witnessed with extreme fury such preparations for his reception, and being at no time a man likely to be trifled with easily, his measures were equally prompt; and while Alibi was demanding "What do you want here?" in his best French, the commander gave the word "Soldiers, present, take your aim, fire!" The effect was instantaneous; the Frenchman had heard of the wanton attack made on their own boat, and conscious of superior discipline and power, not only acted with the full desire to do execution, but under every circumstance favourable to fulfilling it. As sparrows perched on a house-top and unsuspicious of the fowler's aim are seen to drop in abundance on the snow below, so did the unfortunate pirates fall headlong from their rigging into the sea at this unexpected discharge. Alibi himself escaped with only a slight wound, which his usual good luck directed against the least sensitive part of his huge carcase, namely, his thick head; and though the ball had made free with the tip of his right ear, there was still enough of that organ left for any moderate man's donkey. Wincing severely from the pain, and maddened at being thus outwitted, he quickly gave the word to return the fire; though this was hardly needed, for his men understood how to conduct an argument of that noisy description as well as any cut-throats that ever drew trigger; while their chief himself, casting loose one of the quarter-deck guns, pointed it, as well as he could, into the centre of the barge, and discharged its contents into the midst of the French seamen and soldiers. This return quite made up for the previous surprise, and between the two parties, the sharks, who had been so lately disappointed, had their meal supplied in double abundance, and while the combatants were fighting thus angrily above, were seen scrambling for and tearing the wounded limb from limb below.

"Board! board! and hack them to pieces!" cried the Frenchman, finding that he had no easy antagonist; and himself setting the example, his men soon stood upon the decks of the pirate hand to hand, —while he himself, seeing the terror that Alibi's huge form struck into his opponents, rushed with uplifted sword against this bull of Bashan, and at the first lunge had nearly run him through the heart. As the French captain's weapon was the simple small-sword, Alibi, fully aware of his danger, felt not a little puzzled how to meet it, and quickened to his utmost activity by the emergency of the moment, dodged his body so far aside that the blade of the other merely passed in skirmishing order through his fat ribs, and the Frenchman's hilt came up against his bosom with a force so violent, that, while it nearly knocked the breath out of the pirate's body, it deluded the commander into believing that he had slain his adversary. Unfortunately this was not so: Alibi putting out all his strength, grappled his enemy's arm with his left hand, and thus pinning it to his left breast, prevented the Frenchman's extricating his weapon from the fat sheath in which he had imbedded it; while Alibi, swinging round his cutlass in his right hand,

inflicted a most potent wound upon the skull of his foe. In the awkward position in which the parties stood, it was only the point of the cutlass which could be made to strike the blow, and that which would otherwise have carried with it a sentence of death, was now limited in its effect to a frightful and disabling cut which extended from the crown of the forehead across the nose, down through the teeth into the mouth, and out through the under jaw, dividing in its passage the tongue and everything that opposed its progress.

Senseless, but not killed, the knees of the French commander knocked together convulsively for a few seconds—the countenance became blanched and colourless, contrasting frightfully with that dark gory wound, whose sharp clear edge divided the countenance, a moment before animated with the strongest passion, and which to all appearance had let out the soul that had before controlled it. Helplessly the disfigured head fell back upon one shoulder; the body depended for its upright position upon the grasp which Alibi's huge fist still maintained on its right hand; and as the pirate witnessed the ruin his sword had made, a grin of exultation stole over his own sinister face, he relaxed his grasp of the Frenchman's arm, and the body slowly falling to the ground, still retained its hold upon the small-sword, which it drew all ruddy from the wounded side of Alibi, as if it could still rejoice in the thrust it had inflicted—a perfect mockery of the living, a hideous insult to the dead. But though fortune had gone against the French in the person of their commander, his fall had been wholly unable to save the pirates from capture. After the first brief struggle, they found themselves already over-matched; while a second boat from the seventy-four, which had been ordered to follow the first, was now seen rapidly advancing to the assistance of the French. Hoping more from surrender than they could possibly expect from resistance, those who still survived threw down their arms and ran below, leaving Alibi to fight the battle out, single-handed. Such a contest could not of course long continue, and after selling his liberty as dearly as he could, his sword was beat down, his arms pinioned to his side, and bleeding from numerous and superficial wounds, he found himself at length made prisoner. Having been bound beyond all escape, and flung upon his own deck to live or die as chance might dictate, he beheld with the sullenness of despair his captors take possession of his ship, with all the ill-gotten treasures his iniquities had collected, and make sail for the French seventy-four.—Here the wounded were handed over to the surgeon. Envee, who had both his stumps amputated, was told, as if by way of great consolation, that he might yet recover,—a recovery which he well knew would lead him to the gallows; while the French commander, though faint hopes were still entertained of his life, was declared to be in so precarious a state, that death might supervene at any hour.

Bamboozle now found himself placed in an awkward position. He first determined, on finding that Alibi's race of prosperity was run, to turn strictly honest, and to declare all he knew: but the pirates suspecting this, found an opportunity of intimating that if he said one

word to criminate them, they would not only contradict his testimony, and declare that he had always acted as one of their voluntary officers, and shared their profits, but reveal the plan by which he had actually attempted to rob them of an undue share of the plunder, —to verify which tale Paul might yet chance to re-appear—and that this, and this only, was the cause of his speaking against them. Urged by these fears, old Bam determined once more to take the tortuous path instead of the straight one; and inventing some rigmarole story of his having been engaged to act as surgeon in a merchant-vessel, and been thus enticed away from a smaller craft in which he was sailing passenger to Jamaica but a few days before the capture of the schooner, with whose nefarious character he was therefore wholly unacquainted, he passed for a simple English apothecary, who had been extremely wronged, and was received with all the honours of martyrdom by the ward-room mess of the French seventy-four.

The command of this vessel had now devolved upon the senior lieutenant who had assisted in seizing the pirate. A very brief examination of her crew, papers, and stores, coupled with her conduct that day, dispelled every doubt from the minds of the French officers as to her being an out-and-out corsair. Those who survived of her crew were taken on board the Frenchman and put in irons. Nora was consigned to the care of Mrs. Archdeacon, who partly by the information of their tyrant's danger, as well as by her own motherly care, soon restored her to as much tranquillity as her deep and afflicting loss would permit.

A prize crew having been put into the schooner, and the most valuable of her plunder taken on board the line-of-battle ship, they both weighed and stood out to sea. With a view of keeping Nora as quiet as possible, the real destination of the two vessels was pretended to be some neighbouring island, while in reality the French civilian who had taken refuge on board, had done so for the express purpose of proceeding to France—a most idle and futile hope, crowded as the sea then was with English cruisers; and thus in reality it proved. Night had scarcely fallen, with the island of St. Domingo little more than thirteen miles W. by N., when both seventy-four and schooner became enveloped in a thick fog, and in the course of twenty minutes were alarmed by the ringing of bells and the burning of blue lights. Utterly taken by surprise at the sudden contiguity of other vessels, the Frenchmen returned the signal, and in a few moments, to their infinite alarm, found themselves surrounded by a squadron of line-of-battle-ships, of whose nation, destination, or intentions they were alike ignorant. Had the officers remained quiet, they might yet have escaped; but the junior lieutenant having the watch, thoughtlessly hailed the nearest ship. In an instant, the French tone and language were detected—the difference of build, spars, and rigging closely examined, and quickly pronounced to belong to a stranger. A sudden peal of drums was now heard from the squadron, lights burst forth from every port, and the Frenchmen suddenly found themselves among six English ships of the line, who demanded instant surrender. By this time the alarm had so far spread through the vessel, that the Frenchmen themselves had flown to their guns; but

an English seventy-four ranged up within a hundred yards of either quarter, her guns bristling, her lanterns lighted, and her men distinctly visible, each at his post ready to pour in a deadly torrent of shot and fire at a single breath; while close astern appeared a third, with equally formidable preparations, on the watch whenever it might be necessary to luff across the Frenchman's wake, and rake her from stern to stem. Besides these three, the lights of other seventy-fours were seen close at hand.

No alternative remained—resistance would have joined madness to murder, and the Frenchmen were obliged to surrender to the squadron of Admiral L——, who, with six ships of the line, was bound to St. Domingo, to secure if possible that island for the English. Taking possession of his prizes, the admiral anchored next day in the bay which the French seventy-four had lately left, and with a view of protecting the few English merchants on shore, landed a sufficient force of marines and sailors, and seized the old English Consulate.

Not many hundred yards from the walls of the latter stood the house in whose cellars our hero Paul had found refuge, and on whose retreat the drunken slaves had broken in under so many circumstances of horror.

When the negroes beheld their comrades fall headlong into the frightful chasm, from whence they could still hear their groans, the whole party set up a most unearthly yell; and some of them darting round the further end of the pit, shouted to the rest to follow; the foremost being in the very act to spring on the unhappy European mother. Suddenly, like some fearful climax of their chorus, a noise as of a thunderbolt drowned even their own wild scream; and while Paul was expecting instant annihilation, and wondering how by any possibility they could have produced such a terrific sound, the whole hideous group, negroes, women, children—all suddenly vanished from before his eyes; a mass of something, he could scarcely credit what, fell from above, and a heap of stones, mortar, dust, and human beings rolled to his feet; while full on his surprised but more delighted eyes burst down the light of day, and in a few seconds, round the broken edge of the aperture above, he beheld a crowd of negroes armed, and bearing all the soiled appearances of a heavy fight; and among them three Europeans, in their welcome dresses.

"Are you hurt by the shell?" kindly inquired the youngest of the three, whose sharp eyes penetrated into the dust and gloom of the cellar. In an instant the truth flashed on our hero's mind—the sound which he had heard must have been the explosion of some bomb-shell, which, falling in the street over the cellar, the arch of the latter, decayed perhaps from age, and never intended to stand such a rough assault, had yielded beneath the combined force of the powder and the blow, and, by falling, buried in its ruins all those who happened to be under it. A few moments earlier, and our friends from standing in that part of the cellar must have shared the destruction, even if they had not borne it solely.

"Follow me and fly!—if you would save your lives," cried the

generous Paul, darting back to the group who still remained wonder-stricken at what they had seen, and not comprehending how their deliverance had happened, nor almost able to believe that it was at hand. But the eye is more convincing than the ear; and when they beheld Paul snatch up one of the young ones under each arm, and, thus encumbered, begin to clamber over the rubbish, which had already subsided in its fall, the thankful husband, seeing the path open before him, followed, bearing his wife in his arms; while the American, almost paralysed by fear, brought up the rear. Well it was that no time had been lost. Loud cries were now heard in the vaulted chambers they had left; and scarcely had the last of the refugees been assisted by Eveline and Spanker into the street above, when a second party of the revengeful negroes, alarmed by the bursting of the bomb-shell, and apprehensive that some ill had befallen their friends, rushed into the breach, and attempted to cut down the American, who was nearest at hand. As the town had however now been in possession of the slaves several hours, and the marines sent to seize the Consulate by the admiral had been rescuing whomsoever they could, a party of these admirable troops coming up at the moment, the unfortunate Yankee found under their bayonets full protection; and while three or four of the corps accompanied Spanker and the others in escorting the rescued party to the boats of the squadron, now actively engaged in taking off to the English ships all desirous of such a retreat, the rest of the marines obeyed the call of a stout and elderly person, who, with two ladies and as many gentlemen, was seen by Eveline waving for assistance from a garret window, a mob of the intoxicated conquerors endeavouring to force the barricaded door of the house, in order to submit its contents and owners to plunder and violence.

"Forward, my boys—to the rescue!" shouted the officer who commanded the detachment of marines; while in the middle of the privates was hurried along the American, imploring them to hasten to the relief of his own household, so soon as they should have succoured those who previously required their aid.

While therefore the American was hurried one way, Eveline and Paul, and the rest, made the best of their passage in the opposite direction to the boats: no easy task, as the infuriated negroes pressed forward on every hand. By dint of determined courage, slowly retreating step by step, and shooting on the road the more furious of the leaders, the defendants at length came in sight of the boats. When the crews of the latter beheld their shipmates so hardly pressed, they also rushed forward to the rescue; while the marines in possession of the old Consulate, under the walls of which they passed, commenced firing on the mob at the same time. An open road was at length formed to the quay, and while the weaker fugitives took to their heels, the others followed with less precipitation, and all embarked together for the seventy-four lately taken from the French.

Just as they were pushing off, Eveline to her joy beheld, rowing before them, De Passoa and the old stout gentleman whom they had last observed imploring aid from the garret window. Pointing them

out to Spanker and Simpson, she expressed her delight at the safety of a party for whom she felt an unusually strong interest. De Passoa, as a true son of France, could not help entertaining a sense of duty which forbade him to draw the sword against his countrymen, and remaining therefore on the brow of the hill while the battle was fought, he took no part with either side, but entered the city soon after our friends, and pulled up on one side of the French prize, while Eveline and her companions ascended the other. In the excitement of the moment, neither Spanker nor Simpson recognised in the shot-battered hull and half-wrecked spars of the seventy-four, with all her bulk-heads thrown down, the vessel which they had so lately left. Moreover, as Europeans of every sex, age, and appearance continued to crowd alongside, this necessarily added to their confusion. Nor was it until they were shown into the gun-room, that the least conception of this being the same ship in which they had lately sailed, crossed the minds of any of Eveline's party.

As however our friends began to look around them, the young man whom Eveline had rescued, hastily pushing aside his benefactor, rushed tumultuously into the arms of a beautiful creature, who, with equal rapture, sprang to the embrace, and hailed him by the title of "*Dearest husband!*"

"*Her* husband!" loudly exclaimed a female voice, the owner of which, briskly bustling forward, displayed the rotund person of Mrs. Archdeacon Pontifex.

"*Her husband!*" still more loudly and startingly exclaimed the "stout gentleman," darting next into the little circle, and proving to be no less a person than Sir Job Periwinkle. "Merciful Heaven sustain me! It is Nora. My son your *husband*, Nora?"

"Paul Periwinkle!—Nora's *husband!*" repeated Lady Periwinkle, making herself heard.

"Her *husband!*" repeated Dick Doubtful, appearing.

"Dear *Nora's* husband!" echoed Julia, adding to the group.

"*Her* husband! *her* husband!" severally added Wrynecker, Simpson, Spanker, and last of all "the first scholar," severally closing round the youthful pair, who, transported beyond joy at thus meeting after all their sorrows, clung in each other's arms as if nothing short of death should part them again!—Nora's tears flowed freely on the neck of Paul, and the latter imprinted burning kisses on her lips, forgetful of everything but the rapture of having regained her who was dearer than life—her whom in life he, but a few minutes since, had never thought to meet again!

"How can this be?—Nora?" demanded Sir Job. "How can my son *Paul* be your husband, when I always thought you were married to my unf rtunate nephew *John*?"

"Sir, is this your son?" suddenly demanded Mrs. Archdeacon, with an air of the utmost gravity, and pointing to Paul, before Sir Job could receive any answer to his question.

"Yes, madam, he is," replied Sir Job.

"And is this, sir, your daughter-in-law?"

"It would appear so, if she has married her cousin, madam, though her relationship is that of my niece."

"Then, sir, I am very sorry to say, that I fear she is a very improper—I fear I ought to say a very wicked young woman; for all I can tell you is, that she has not only been living in my family under false pretences, but actually living with another young gentleman—my husband's secretary, as her husband, and she as his wife."

"—Secretary!—" repeated Paul, starting back from Nora's arms as if a thousand asps had stung him from her bosom.

"Yes!" cried Mrs. Archdeacon, with infinite virtue and dignity, addressing herself to poor Paul. "Yes! injured and unfortunate young man! I say my husband's—Mr. Archdeacon Pontifex's secretary—and there the young gentleman stands."

As Mrs. Archdeacon concluded, she laid a forcible hand on the collar of Evelyn, and dragged the youth forward into the circle standing round her. Confronting Eveline with Nora, she pointed out, to the approbation of all eyes, the two culprits, blushing deeply, as if either's cheek reflected the other's colour, while both hung down their heads as though the charge had been too sadly true.

"There! there!" cried Mrs. Archdeacon, unable to conceal, in the midst of all her pretended horror, a tone of triumph at the confusion and distress created: "there, unfortunate young man! there stands my husband's secretary, and there stands the wicked young woman who, up to this moment, has been my governess—though I have not at present any children; now let them deny, if they can, their having lived under my eye, and having indeed first come to me at Liverpool as man and wife."

"Villain! is this true?" cried Paul Periwinkle, turning as pale as death, and seizing Eveline's collar by the left hand, while with the other he snatched forth the sword with which he had so lately been fighting his way and which he had picked up on shore.

"Hear me! hear me!" implored Eveline, as Nora, interposing her body as a shield, fainted on Eveline's bosom, and thereby greatly increased the virtuous disdain of the moral people around, who, however willing to condemn, seemed very little inclined to listen to any explanation that might exculpate the accused. Even Sir Job, as usual, hasty to a fault, clasped his hands over his beloved niece, as if he never more could look upon her; while Lady Periwinkle, not altogether displeased at this exposure, kept chiming in.

"I always told you, my dear, what sort of person she would turn out. Come back, Julia, this instant!" pulling her daughter away by the hand, as the latter affectionately pressed forward to render to her fainting cousin all those sweet offices which woman, who most requires, most ably renders. "Come back, I say, Child," continued the lady mother, as if some contagious disease lurked in the very clothes of Nora, so great was the strength she used to pull Julia from her side.

In the midst of all this confusion, De Passoa, Simpson, and Spanker had too much regard for Eveline to see her unfairly treated before their eyes, by a youth so visibly her superior in strength as Paul. Though

they were vexed to find this supposed flaw in their friend's escutcheon, they all agreed that the accredited "young gentleman" might have made a much worse choice for the perpetration of a peccadillo, which their lax morality did not view in the heinous light that every one else regarded it, and therefore interposed their sturdy arms between Paul's threatening sword and Eveline's bosom, crying "Hear him out! hear him out! fair play is fair play all the world over."

"He is innocent of any wrong!" exclaimed Nora, half reviving, and in her wish to exculpate Eveline throwing a tenfold weight of blame upon herself, and thereby unintentionally aggravating to the last degree the sufferings of her agonised husband.

All attention was now rivetted on the suspected couple for explanation. Eveline, conscious of the awkward and disagreeable revelation to be made before so large a crowd of strangers, and, still worse, so many friends with whom she had acted a widely different part, still felt that a less public *éclaircissement* would ruin the character of Nora, and yet shrank in horror from the task imposed on her. After gazing upon the ground for a few minutes, trying in vain to tell the awkward story, the roseate colour now shooting up to the very summit of her ample forehead, now leaving her as "pale as monumental marble," a sudden thought occurred to her, and lifting up her hand, she dashed her cap from her head, severed with a sudden snap some little tie, and in an instant her beautiful person was shrouded with a profusion of long black silky hair. Drawing off her gloves and extending some of these beautiful tresses towards Paul, she exclaimed, while the tears gushed forth from eyes that had too long been dry,

"Suspicious youth, too little worthy of the treasure you possess! Are these?—this hair?—these hands?—the characteristics of your sex? To prove the innocence of your wife, I abandon the disguise which was assumed for her security as well as mine! How could two friendless girls have wandered through the world secure from insult, else?—I am! —I am!—"

Here a loud sob prevented the utterance of a word, full to the unhappy speaker of a thousand bitter memories, and in the effort to pronounce it, sense deserting the speaker, De Passoa's arm alone prevented her from falling, while the crowd around taking up her meaning, supplied the wanting word, by the unanimous cry of "A woman! a woman!"

Now that the truth was proclaimed, numberless facts seemed to flash upon the eyes of all beholders, to bear witness to its correctness; the exquisite complexion, the beautiful small features, the arching swan-like throat, the fine thin voice, the rounded bosom, the full swelling hip and fairy waist, with the slight symmetrical limbs which supported the whole, even to the very height, all combined, not only to prove of what sex Eveline really was, but to reproach the bystanders that they had ever allowed themselves to be taken in by so palpable an imitation of a man!

"A woman! a woman!" shouted Mrs. Archdeacon indignantly, and yet utterly unable to deny the self-evident truth: "No wonder that he was never able to estimate me properly. This accounts then for the coldness of his admiration!"

"A ladi! a ladi!" repeated De Passoa, clasping his burden a little more warmly, it must be confessed, than was strictly proper, as he uttered the words—"*Mon Dieu!* where is my eyes, that I shall never have seen her little tricks! Oh! *charmante! charmante!*" pressing her cold hands to his lips one after another, with all the rapid gesticulation of a Frenchman, and slyly stealing in a very sensible manner, when he thought no one was looking, a kiss from her neck, that lay so invitingly near, that forty thousand anchorites might well have been forgiven for a similar theft; while both Spanker and Simpson, who had seen her in the front of battle, now started back, on the discovery of her sex, with open eyes and still more widely distended mouths.

Paul, as might naturally have been expected, was among the last to be convinced; but after narrowly scrutinising the silky hair, and beautiful little hands that had been presented to him, and watching the troubled swell of that high-minded but tortured breast, that seemed labouring at every throe for life, each lingering doubt vanished, and rushing forward once more to Nora's side, he again folded her in a passionate embrace, that was the best assurance of renewed confidence and love. At this moment the English lieutenant in command of the prize came down into the gun-room, and in a loud authoritative voice demanded

"Is Archdeacon Pontifex here?"

"Oh! certainly," replied the archdeacon.

"Step forward this way then," continued the lieutenant: "the advocate-general wishes to question you relative to the running down of the French man-of-war's boat by the pirate schooner."

"Oh! don't trouble the archdeacon," chimed in a well-known voice from the other end of the gun-room; "I'll come to him." The speaker walked forward; and to the astonishment of all who recognised him, there, in the person of the advocate-general of St. Domingo, stood Charles Periwinkle himself.

"Charles, my dear boy!" exclaimed Sir Job; and then pausing in his utterance from fear—"but no, this cannot be—it would be too great a blessing to have both my children restored to me."

"My father!" articulated Charles in equal surprise and delight, hastening to seize the proffered hand; and then as his eye fell on Paul, and he pronounced his name, a change of the utmost sadness and misery came over his animated features. Sir Job at once perceived that some sad drawback to happiness was in store for him; and after the first salutations of relatives so long parted, he drew aside his eldest son, and received the distressing explanation.

Charles on his first leaving England had, it seems, been unfortunate enough to sail in a transport that was dismasted, and been blown to leeward of the convoy, where he was picked up by a British squadron bound straight to the East Indies. The English man-of-war landed him at the Cape of Good Hope, as the nearest point at which he could wait for a vessel to take him to Jamaica. Some time elapsed before this could be arranged; and on gaining the island, he found the supposition of his death had caused his own post to be filled up, as an equivalent for which

the governor-general had given him a temporary appointment in the expedition to St. Domingo as advocate-general, our forces being sent to Hayti, at the instigation of some of the inhabitants, with a view to its occupation by the British, if possible. So far Charles's intelligence was well enough; but unfortunately, a few minutes since, he had been informed by the flag-captain, that orders had arrived to apprehend, wherever found in the East Indies, and deliver up to execution, on the proof of identity, one Paul Periwinkle, supposed to have escaped to that quarter of the world, after having by force and arms defeated the ends of justice, and so evaded his own doom in England. Thus at the very height of their joy were these unfortunate relations plunged into the deepest misery and apprehension; nor was it till Sir Job suggested the possibility of the rumour being false, that a ray of hope illumined their despair. The despatches and instructions in question were said to have been brought by a frigate from Jamaica scarcely an hour since; and Charles, by Sir Job's advice, started off to ascertain from the officers in command, whether any such despatches had really arrived for him. Filled with the most intense anxiety and the deepest forebodings, Charles tore himself away from the many friends he had so lately found, and rowed as rapidly as possible to the frigate, whose men were even then loosing sails, preparatory to the ship's immmediate departure with despatches from the admiral in command of the squadron to the government in England. Rushing up the side lest he should be too late, one of the marines on guard at first refused to admit him on board without an order from the officer of the watch, as the men were then running the anchor up to the bows. Charles, on the other hand, rendered desperate by feeling how little time he had to spare, was endeavouring to pass the gangway, by stating who he was; but the sentry told him, that however great the advocate-general might be, he was not the corporal of the watch, and therefore could not countermand a sentinel's orders.

"What's the matter?" said the midshipman of the deck, coming up to the entry-port: but the sight of the new-comer appeared only to render matters more perplexed; for the midshipman was no sooner beheld by the advocate-general, than his face changed to an ashy paleness, a universal trembling came over his whole body, and but for the timely hand of the other outstretched to save him, he would certainly have fallen overboard.

"My cousin *John!*" exclaimed Charles, scrambling with much exertion to claim his hold, "is it possible that I behold you here *alive?*"

"Ay, to be sure, and hearty, Charles, my boy: how are you?"

"For God's sake get me a glass of water, and let me sit down somewhere; I feel as if my heart would burst. What inexplicable misery you have caused us all!"

Without waiting to inquire how he, the ill-used Jack, had caused inexplicable misery, he instantly complied with Charles's request, because he beheld in his present illness sufficient warranty of his sufferings to know that the charge was at any rate brought forward in strict truth. Once arrived on the lower deck, where they would converse together uninterruptedly, an explanation was rapidly given by John Periwinkle,

*alias* Prestone, which, while it completely exonerated the midshipman, less delighted and astounded the advocate; for in the same instant the latter recovered a cousin judicially found to have been murdered, and cleared the innocence of a brother whom a British jury had found guilty, and whom he himself afterwards received orders to execute for the murder!

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## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

### WHICH SUPPLIES THE TAIL-PIECE OF OUR PICTURE.

Among the readers of all histories—true histories we mean—like ours, which unthinking people have sometimes thought fit to call novels, it is held by unanimous judgment and consent, that so soon as the plot is developed, and the gist of the story told, the more briefly the narrator sums up the concluding nothings, and dismisses his characters to their required repose, the greater the virtue to be ascribed to him. In the last chapter we have at length been enabled to place before our readers the issue of that narrative, which, as it embraced such a variety of actors, necessarily required so great a space in which to delineate them. The explanation which Prestone gave to Charles was simply this;—and however much we may be supposed to have drawn from fancy, the case, singular as it may be, is one recorded in the law-books for the benefit of all who are more ready to judge ill of others than to judge rightly of themselves:—On the night on which the murder of John Periwinkle was supposed to have been committed, it is perfectly true that the cousins had a quarrel respecting Nora, to whom Paul, and not John, as was believed, had been privately married. John, to pique his cousin, and ignorant of the sacred tie which he had contracted, had been paying great attention to Nora; and having been obliged that night, from a temporary want of room, to share Paul's bed, violent words ensued between them. Whether from the excitement thus produced, or any other cause, John was not able to decide, but not long after the light had been extinguished in their room, John was awakened by a sense of weakness and pain, and found that his arm, which had been bled two days before, had burst out bleeding afresh. Not choosing to ask the assistance of Paul, with whom he had quarrelled, nor to alarm the household who had all retired to bed, John, very generously, but, as it afterwards turned out, very unfortunately, arose in silence, groped about the room for his clothes, sprinkling everything with blood around, and quietly descended the great staircase to seek the assistance of Bamboozle, whose handy-work the previous operation had been. In the mean while, Paul, with the maddened jealousy of the lover, was lying awake, filled with the most outrageous suspicions, ignorant of what had really happened, and suspecting the course John had taken towards the bottom of the house to be a mere pretence for throwing him (Paul) off his guard, while the real object of

Jack was to return up stairs and steal to Nora's room. Thus are we always doomed to suffer for our own deviations from correctness. To Nora's chamber, since his private marriage, it had been Paul's nightly custom to steal himself, until the coolness which had that evening arisen respecting Nora's encouragement of John's flirtation. This our unfortunate heroine had innocently enough appeared to suffer, in order to throw dust in the eyes of Lady Periwinkle, whose hatred to herself she well knew, and which indeed had led to the imprudence of her having consented to a private marriage with her cousin. The latter, maddened by that green-eyed monster, which is indeed the true phœnix of the soul in rising from its own ashes, had crept out of bed soon after John had quitted the room, and stolen to Nora's door. Here he fancied that he heard voices, and in a state of perfect frenzy returned to his own apartment, not knowing what to believe, or how to act, now lying down and rolling on his bed, now rising to pace his room, and ultimately committing those various acts which left his person marked with blood, and fixed upon him all the suspicion of murder, and which he had vainly endeavoured to explain at his trial.

Even at his trial, however, the same difficulty beset his path—his mind was still in perfect doubt and grief as to Nora's conduct, and being unable to procure an interview with her, he was equally unable therefore to speak the whole truth, and the result was the verdict that went against him. John Periwinkle, with all a sailor's carelessness, had proceeded straight down the avenue, towards the house of Bamboozle. On his way he unfortunately met the press-gang, who, in spite of every remonstrance, and the most desperate struggle John could make, seized, bound, and carried him to sea. Here a fresh dilemma presented itself —John, who had entered the service before as a midshipman, beneath an unfeeling Tartar of a captain, and had actually run away, was afraid to give his real name and history, and insist on his release, for fear of arousing the wrath of his old superior, and being tried as a deserter. This same motive, therefore, obliged him to use the utmost caution in writing any letters to his family. To procure his freedom, he mainly trusting to be enabled to escape a second time and to get home, adopted the name of Prestone, and determined to bear his sorrows as manfully as he could.

In the mean time the frigate was wrecked, and himself cast upon the French coast, where, as we have seen, though he saved his life, he lost his heart: and being thus out of the reach of any newspapers during Paul's trial, he remained wholly ignorant of the mischief he had occasioned.

Thus much at present of the fate of Jack, the disastrous turn of which was owing to the machinations of Envee. The latter, imagining that of Nora's two suitors, John was the one most favoured, determined to be rid of him the first opportunity, and keeping a very narrow watch upon his movements, and pretending all the while to be his sincere friend, thus got possession of his secrets, and instigated a pressgang in the neighbourhood to watch for him, as the best mode of taking him quietly out of the way. The circumstances under which Jack happened

to be pressed, seemed to be an unlooked-for advantage to Envee, which he had not the virtue to forego. The cry of murder against Jack's cousin Paul suggested the hint of getting rid of the second rival, by fixing him with the assassination. Deepening in guilt as he proceeded, it was by such devilish machinations that the greater part of that evidence was manufactured on which Paul's sentence turned. A body had cast up, on the morning of Jack's imprisonment, from a neighbouring wreck, bearing the marks J B; the latter part of the B, Envee had scratched out; and the face being mutilated, and the body of the same age—and Jack in his struggle with the pressgang having lost his shoe and jacket, the latter containing the fatal knife of Paul, which Jack had taken the day before, to use,—these various circumstances were so adroitly managed by the fiendish ingenuity of Envee, as to produce the effect he desired. More than this, however, had been the result. In the pocket of Jack, Envee had found one side of a letter which, with his usual want of principle, he had read; it was from some young schoolfellow, then articled to a solicitor, saying, that Admiral Acorn had recently employed the principal of the office to make a will, "bequeathing the whole of his large property to a certain beautiful young lady, who would be found at the Vicarage, in Ireland;" and as the fortune would amount to upwards of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds, the writer advised Jack to lose no time in running off with her; which he, the writer, had no doubt Jack might do, more especially as the lady was not aware how large an heiress she was destined to become. Now as this side of the letter had neither date nor signature, and as it greatly piqued the necessitous curiosity of Envee to find out who this great heiress could be,—and as moreover he had never chanced to read the epistle until some little time after Nora had been sent to the house of a clergyman, in Ireland,—Envee cheated himself into a belief that Nora was the heiress meant; and finding out her address and overlooking the slight fact of her supposed indiscretion with John, he resolved on proceeding thither, and obtaining possession of her person at all hazards. How this was accomplished we already know; and in every point such villany was destined to be defeated. This intelligence of the will was quite true; but the lady to whom allusion was in reality made, as the heiress, was our fair friend Eveline, to whose family the admiral was distantly related by his father's marriage. But even this disposition of property was not destined to remain; the testy old admiral, touched by the devotion which his nephew had shown to Sir Job Periwinkle when all the world fled from him, in a more reasonable hour re-made his will, and forgiving Dick Doubtful at last for presuming to be a lawyer in preference to a sailor, had cancelled the former testament, and left to Dick the whole of his fortune, provided he married Eveline, and two-thirds if he did not, the rest under such circumstances to go to the lady. Among the papers which the frigate had brought to the squadron, was the intelligence of the eccentric veteran's demise, and the contents of this his last will. The rest of our explanation, as far as it relates to Envee, was furnished by the dying lips of that wretched man, from whom the

terrors of remorse had wrung this atonement, under the approach of death, in one of its most painful forms—mortification, namely, of the remnant of one of the limbs amputated.

On a representation being made to the admiral by Charles of the various facts we have stated, he not only ordered the immediate discharge from the service, of John; but, on learning that Doubtful was the nephew of his old brother officer Acorn, actually delayed for twenty-four hours the passage of Jack's late frigate to England, and allowed the whole of our at last happy and united friends to make arrangements for their return home. This was soon completed. Some of Alibi's crew having turned king's evidence, that worthy was given to his proper destiny, the gibbet, without the intervention of any of Sir Job's family; while long before the frigate sailed, Lady Periwinkle in the most gracious manner had condescended to give full concurrence to Julia's bringing her a son-in-law with eighty thousand pounds in the person of Mr. Richard Doubtful, barrister-at-law, &c. &c. &c., in whom unnumbered virtues now shot up to view in the eyes of her ladyship. Dick having most gladly resigned the additional forty thousand to Eveline, that lady was also speedily surrounded by countless suitors. After all the horrors she had experienced, she naturally shrank from these; though there were two among the crowd, who each offering her his hand, already stood so well in her esteem, that, almost despite of herself, she could scarcely avoid crowning the happiness of one of them.—These were Wrynecker and De Passoa: but though she refused both for about the fiftieth time on reaching England, many who professed great knowledge of that mystery of all mysteries, a woman's heart, declared that the son of chivalry was sure of his day, if he would but persevere. Be that as it may, on arriving at Portsmouth a public solemnization of marriage took place between Doubtful and Julia; at which also were re-married Nora and Paul. John now set off to bring home, as he expressed it, by hook or by crook the fair *L'Egérie;* his parting from the lady of his love having been to a certain degree a second impressment.

Captain Fidget seeing that his seaman was preferred before him, not only determined to escape from the French coast himself, but to carry off by force John, or in other words Prestone, also. Money, the universal seducer, enabled him to bribe over a crew of smugglers. Prestone was seized when least prepared, conveyed on board before he could make good any resistance—which he could hardly have ventured, seeing that he was still amenable to martial law and under Fidget's command; and while the smuggling vessel was making for the coast of England, they fell in with the Amaranth frigate, to the commander of which, Fidget immediately reported himself. Being obliged, in common decency, to make a very favourable representation of Prestone in the matter of the Nero, he was promoted to the quarter-deck, where his brother found him.

Having now obtained his father's full consent, he, as we have stated, set forth to bring home the fair *L'Egérie* as his bride; an adventurous undertaking in time of war between the two countries, but all the

dearer to its projector for the dangers that surrounded it. The family happiness was now complete. Sir Job, exulting in the full power of proving his own and his son's innocence, set forward for London, determined upon trouncing Costs at every hazard, in which Charles proffered his able assistance heart and soul. Grateful to Mrs. Archdeacon Pontifex for sheltering Nora in the hour of adversity—though she did hire her as governess in hopes of reaching the honours of maternity after fifty years of age—Sir Job, in the fulness of his heart, promised the next presentation of the Rectory of Berrylea (some fifteen hundred a year) to her husband, the present incumbent being already eighty-seven.

Simpson received the appointment of captain-general and superintendant of all Sir Job's shipping, while Spanker with a handsome pension was made his chief mate. As the *cortége* was about to leave the hotel at Portsmouth, Nora, who from a window was giving instructions as to putting some parcels into the carriage pockets, received a profound salaam from a smart little fellow in a seaman's dress, and with great joy recognising Jack Spratt, she introduced him and his services to her uncle, who at once took steps by which he ultimately succeeded in procuring his discharge from the navy, and appointment as Paul's confidential valet. Bamboozle finally obtained forgiveness for all his misdeeds, and secure of full employment for the future for his obstetric art, he set off with the family on his way home, where were already assembled all the other minor characters of our story, and where, we must add, "Old Bam" always continued to mourn and search for his umbrella, which every one believed to be a piece of affectation, until its remains were discovered in the hut of a fisherman's wife. Unable to restrain his eagerness, Bamboozle broke the handle of it across his knee, and discovered a secret hoard of jewelry, which this singular miser had stored up through the greater part of his life, and never found courage to deposit in a more regular, though more distant place of security.

With such little variations as human life must ever know, Good Fortune now shone with her brightest rays upon our friends; and here, while the picture has all the benefit of such sunshine, we take our leave of it, not wholly, we hope, unimpressed with the sound wisdom of suffering our trials with the utmost fortitude and integrity we can call to our support, and leaving all beside to Heaven!

THE END.

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